

12 8-36

LIBRARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRINCETON, N. J.

PRESENTED BY

Herbert Adams Gibbons.

BV 4811 .E39 1877

Edwards, Tryon, 1809-1894.

Light for the days



LIGHT FOR THE DAY,

OR,

HEAVENLY THOUGHTS FOR EARTHLY GUIDANCE.

A DAILY MONITOR.

BY
TRYON VEDWARDS, D.D.

As daily bread is needful for the body, so daily communion with the truth of God is needful for the soul.

PHILADELPHIA :
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK,
No. 1334 CHESTNUT STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by
THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

WESTCOTT & THOMSON,
Stereotypers and Electrotypers, Philadelphia.

INTRODUCTION.

MANUALS for daily devotional reading have, of late years, been greatly multiplied, and if good, there can hardly be too many of them; for every good book is a blessing to the world, and what may strike one reader or class of readers, may be less attractive and profitable to another, so that each additional work, if properly prepared, may be an additional influence for good.

Most of these works, however, in their mode of presenting truth, are rather didactic than suggestive. The writers select a text, and then endeavor to impress the lessons it suggests to their own minds, rather than aid the reader to draw out its lessons for himself, and apply them to his own experience and needs. In contrast to this method of direct comment, which expresses the thoughts of another, this work would lead the reader to question both himself and the text, and thus to apply to his own case the truth it may bring before him.

The advantages of this mode of devotional reading are great. "More knowledge," says good old John Owen, "is ordinarily diffused, especially among the young, by one hour's catechetical exercise, than by many hours of continued direct discourse." And a large part of the teachings of Socrates was by questions, drawing forth in their answers the thought of his disciples. And so in the Bible, and especially in the teachings of our Saviour, we are constantly met by questions, such as, "Adam, where art thou?"; "What doest thou here Elijah?"; "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"; "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?"

But the peculiar power which well-directed questioning has over others, may be equally useful to ourselves. Many a teacher has found that his questions to his pupils on their lesson have taught that lesson thoroughly to himself. And so to question ourselves in any department of thought, is the sure way to increase and impress our knowledge; and this is true of the most important kinds of knowledge—knowledge of self, and of divine truth, and of duty to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow-men.

Another object in preparing this work has been, to impress its lessons not only by the habit of self-questioning, but by the choice and striking thoughts of our best religious writers both in prose and poetry. From a wide range of authors such thoughts have

been carefully gathered for the benefit of the reader, and so presented as to illustrate and impress the teachings of the text. Such gems of thought are always valuable; but they have a double value and interest when applied to spiritual things.

In preparing this work many extracts have been taken and much aid derived from a valuable little manual called "*Help by the Way.*" But in every case where a thought has been suggested, or a subject adopted, the article has been carefully rewritten, while the various illustrative extracts have been gathered from any and every source that might make them interesting and profitable to the reader. Most of these extracts have the names of their authors appended. Those marked with a * are by the author of this work. May the work itself shed a clear and "*Daily Light*" on many a pilgrim's path, and that path shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day.

T E.

September, 1877.

LIGHT FOR THE DAY.

JANUARY 1.

But this I say, brethren, the time is short.—1 COR. vii. 29.

DO I realize how fast time is flying? how fast probation is speeding away, and eternity is drawing near? Has the great work of life as yet been begun by me? Am I living by faith on the only Son of God? Knowing the uncertainty of life, am I striving wisely and faithfully to improve it, to the glory of God, to my own spiritual good, and for the good of my fellow-men?

Time well employed is Satan's deadliest foe; it leaves no opening for the lurking fiend.—WILCOX.

Make diligent and wise use of time if thou valuest eternity. Yesterday cannot be recalled. To-morrow cannot be assured. To-day, only, is thine, which, if thou procrastinatest, thou losest; which lost, is lost forever.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

The great rule of moral conduct, is, next to God, to respect time.—LAVATER.

As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time.—MASON.

As if you could kill time, without injuring eternity!—THOREAU.

To show us the worth of time, God, who is most liberal of all other things, never gives us two moments together, nor grants us a second till he has withdrawn the first, still keeping the third in his own hands, so that we are in perfect uncertainty whether we shall have it or not. The true way of preparing for the last moment, is, to spend all others well, and ever to be expecting that.—FENELON.

We are always complaining that our days are few, and yet acting as though there would be no end of them.—SENECA.

Time is what we want most, but what, alas! we use worst.—PENN.

The bell strikes one. We take no note of time
But from its loss. To give it, then, a tongue,
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright
It is the knell of my departed hours.
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the signal that demands despatch.
How much is to be done!—YOUNG.

Search the Scriptures.—JOHN v. 39.

DO I receive the Bible as indeed the word of God, believing all that is there taught, and endeavoring to do all that is there commanded? And do I follow the direction of the Saviour to *search the Scriptures*? Do I search them, not to gratify mere idle curiosity, but with diligence, with an humble and teachable spirit, and with that fervent prayer which is one of the best interpreters? Do I earnestly desire and seek the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, that I may search aright, that I may be instructed in divine truth, and directed in the way of duty, and that I may honor Christ, and be found in the way of salvation?

The Bible is a window in this prison of hope, through which we look into eternity.—DWIGHT.

I will answer for it, that the longer you read the Bible, the more you will love it. It will grow sweeter and sweeter.—ROMAINE.

The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.—FLAVEL.

Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
This book—this holy book—on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne
Mercy took down, and in the light of Time,
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow,
And evermore beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.

—POLLOCK.

Commit thy works unto the Lord.—PROV. xvi. 3.

WHEN doubts or difficulties beset my path, do I at once take them to God, and ask him to make plain the way before me? Do I perplex myself needlessly, as well as dishonor God, by endeavoring by my own wisdom to find my way through difficulty or in duty, thereby practically distrusting his promised guidance and help? Before entering on any new work or undertaking, do I make it a point to ask his blessing, and to seek the guidance of his word, and providence, and Spirit?

If the Lord careth for thee, be thyself at rest; for if he care, why shouldst thou care too? His providence will provide if thou sincerely trust it.—LEIGHTON.

To make our reliance on Providence both pious and rational, we should, in every enterprise, prepare all things with the same care, diligence and activity that we would do if there were no such thing as Providence for us to depend upon; and then, when we have done all this, we should as wholly and humbly rely upon it, as if we had made no preparations at all.—SOUTH.

Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in him whate'er betide;
Thou'l find him, in the evil days,
Thine all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move.

—NEUMARK.

Set your affection on things above.—COL. iii. 2.

WHERE are my affections habitually set? Is it on things above, or on things here below? Am I living chiefly for this world, or for the next? What is there here that is worthy of my supreme love? What is there there, that is not? Do I not hope to dwell for ever there with my Saviour? And if my endless home is to be there, and my everlasting treasure there, should not my heart be there also?

The sure way of not being conformed to the world, is to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. "If the bushel is filled with wheat," says another, "you may defy the devil to fill it with tares." If the gaze be steadfastly fixed upon heaven, it will not be distracted with the things of time and sense.—JAY.

Lose not sight of Christ in this cloudy and dark day. He is the way—ever walk in him; the truth—ever receive his teachings; the life—every day so live that you may for ever live in him.—RUTHERFORD.

To fill your life with the spirit of heaven here, is the way to make sure of going to heaven hereafter.
—THOMAS.

Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing that higher world to disappear,
To seem less lovely, or its hopes less clear,
That is our world, our idol, though it bear
Affection's impress or devotion's air.—KEBLE.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.—ECCL. ix. 10.

AM I not only intelligent but decided in religion, not halting between God and the world? Am I diligent and earnest in doing God's work in season and out of season, watching for opportunities, and not allowing them to slip from me through carelessness or love of ease? Do I pray and strive to be whole-hearted and faithful in the service of Christ, so that if death should come suddenly it may not find me sleeping?

If sorrow could enter heaven, if a sigh could be heard there, or a tear roll down the cheek of a saint in light, it would be for lost opportunities, for the time spent in neglect of God which might have been spent for his glory.—PAYSON.

It may seem possible now, by avoiding all extremes and all thoroughness in religion or in worldliness, to conform to both; but in the day of separation it will be found to have been a failure for eternity—a failure as complete as it is disastrous and remediless.—BONAR.

Satan selects his disciples when they are idle, but Christ chose his while they were busy at their work, either mending their nets or casting them into the sea.
—FARRENDON.

Fill up each hour with what will last,
Buy up the moments as they go;
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.—BONAR.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.—2 Cor. xiii. 5.

DO I follow this injunction of the apostle in all truth and sincerity? Do I examine myself by the standard of God's word as in the presence of One from whom nothing can be hid? Do I look to the foundation of my faith, and know if Christ is the rock on which I rest? Do I remember that the heart is deceitful above all things? And in the solemn work of self-examination, do I seek the enlightening aid of the Holy Spirit, that I may truly know myself and be led into all truth? —

First examine *how* you examine yourself. When a tradesman is about to weigh his goods, he must first of all adjust his scales, and see that his weights are right. It is a ruinous folly to measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves among ourselves. God's word is the only right standard of judgment.

The height of all philosophy, both natural and moral, is to know thyself, and the end of this knowledge is to know God. Know thyself that thou mayest know God; and know God that thou mayest love him. In the one thou art initiated into wisdom, and in the other perfected in it.—QUARLES.

Help us to build each other up;
Help us ourselves to prove;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.
Light in thy light, grant we may see,
And guide us ever nearer thee!

Continuing instant in prayer.—ROM. xii. 12.

ARE my prayers the sincere and earnest utterances of the desires of my heart? Or are they listless, cold, formal, forced from me by conscience, the result, only, of habit, or extorted, perhaps, by alarm and fear? Do I deeply feel the need of what I ask; and do I ask with unwavering faith in God's promises? The more frequently I pray, the nearer do I find myself to God—the more consecrated in heart and life to him?

Prayer is the preface to the book of Christian living; the text of the life sermon; the girding on of the armor for battle; the pilgrim's preparation for his journey. It must be supplemented by action, or it amounts to nothing.—PHELPS.

Prayer is the appeal of want to Him who only can relieve it; it is the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty; the prostration of humility; the fervency of penitence; the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but compunction of the soul. It is the "Lord save us" of the drowning Peter; the cry of faith to the ear of mercy; the communion of the child with the loving father.—HANNAH MORE.

For once I sought a time and place,
For solitude and prayer;
But now, where'er I find thy face,
I find a closet there!

Put on the whole armor of God.—EPH. vi. 11.

DO I constantly and faithfully use all the weapons which are divinely provided for the Christian's conflict with the powers of evil? Do I aim at all grace—at entire safety, and so put on the whole armor of God that no part may be left exposed to the darts of the destroyer? Do I ever remember that all this defensive armor is God's, and not mine; and that no armor of my own making could afford the least protection in the day of temptation and conflict?

Christ has promised to strengthen and help, and uphold all that put their trust in him, and to make them conquerors over every spiritual enemy. And as he is faithful to his word, we need never fear. Rather may we not say, "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."—I. SMITH.

It is a device of Satan to seduce men into a drowsy state, and then beguile them with some dream. When religion becomes irksome, then he presents some novelty which allures and deceives, whereas, if we had been prepared, we should have detected the deceit and escaped the snare.—CECIL.

Onward, Christian, onward go !
Join the conflict; face the foe !
Faint not, much doth yet remain ;
Dreary is the long campaign.
Let your drooping heart be glad ;
March in heavenly armor clad,
Fight, nor think the battle long,
Victory soon shall be your song !

—H. K. WHITE.

Having a good conscience.—1 PET. iii. 16.

DO I prayerfully endeavor to have a conscience void of offence toward both God and man? Do I seek to enlighten my conscience by God's word, and then to keep it sensitive, tender, quick to perceive evil, and prompt to turn from it? Do I live as under the eye of God, studying in all that I say and do, to regulate my daily life according to his will?

A tender conscience is like the apple of the eye—the least dust that gathers into it, affects it. There is no surer or better way to know whether our consciences are dead and stupid, than to watch what impression small sins make upon them. A tender and faithful conscience will no more allow of small sins, than of great.—BISHOP HOPKINS.

A good conscience aims in all things to do right, both as to God and man. And to possess such a conscience, we must have it properly informed as to both truth and duty, quick to perceive the distinctions between good and evil, and prompt and faithful to do what is right. In sensitiveness it should be like the fabled ring, which pressed the finger at even the thought of wrong; and in authority, as the voice of God to the soul.

*

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do;
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heaven pursue.—POPE.

Be kindly affectioned one to another, in brotherly love.—ROM. xii. 10.

HAVE I that true and pure affection to others which springs from a heart imbued with the love of God? Do I cultivate a spirit of kindness and courtesy to all with whom I come in contact? Am I habitually considerate, sympathizing, thoughtful of the feelings and happiness of others, willing to forget self that I may add to their comfort or do them good? Does the love of God control my actions, influence my motives, prompt my words? Am I kindly affectioned in little things as well as in great; at home as well as abroad; to the poor and lowly as well as to the great?

Life is made up not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart, and both secure and give comfort.

—SIR H. DAVY.

Civility is a charm that attracts the love of all men, and too much is better to show than too little.—BISHOP HORNE.

This kind of affection puts us on to express ourselves both in word and action, with the utmost courtesy and obligingness that may be.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Teach me to live with kindly words for all,

Wearing no cold, repulsive brow of gloom;
Waiting with cheerful patience, till thy call

Summon my spirit to her heavenly home.
There may the seeds that love on earth has sown,
Bring forth a harvest blest around thy throne!

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?—JOHN xxi. 16.

DO my thoughts, feelings, words, actions, all testify that I do indeed love Christ? And does my love to him lead me to love the things that he commands, and the people whom he loves? Are the great interests of his kingdom ever near to my heart? Does the love of Christ constrain me to love his word, to cherish his Spirit, to walk in his ways, and in all things to endeavor to live for him? Does my life meet the test of the Saviour, “If a man love me, he will keep my words”?

Nearness of life to the Saviour will necessarily involve greatness of love to him. As nearness to the sun increases the temperature of the various planets, so near and intimate communion with Jesus, raises the heat of the soul's affections toward him.—SPURGEON.

If thou neglectest love to thy neighbor, in vain thou professest thy love to God; for by thy love to God love to thy neighbor is begotten, and by love to thy neighbor thy love to God is cherished and increased.—QUARLES.

I love my God, but with no love of mine;
For I have none to give.

I love thee, Lord; but all the love is thine;
For by thy love I live.

I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.

—GUIGNON.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.—Ps. li. 10.

IS it my great desire that my corrupt and sinful nature should be changed? Like David, do I feel the sinfulness of my heart; and that, of myself, I am unable to cleanse it? And is my prayer, like his, “Create in me a clean heart, O God”? Do I study God’s word to know how the heart may be made clean? Do I earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit, that my heart may be thoroughly cleansed?

Purity of heart implies a care of the heart, a discipline of the imagination, a covenant with the eyes, an avoidance of all appearance of evil, a conscientious regulation of our secret thoughts, desires and affections, as in the sight of God. It consists in such an inward change and renovation of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, as leads us to approve and comply with whatever is pure and holy and commanded by God.—E. H. NEVIN.

Thy deserts for sin are, rejection, wrath, hell; Christ’s deserts are, pardon, acceptance, life. If God by his Spirit hath shown thee the former, he will surely give thee the latter.—CARLOS WILCOX.

Oh, for a lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true and clean!
Which neither life nor death can part,
From Him who dwells within:
A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine.—C. WESLEY.

That I may know him.—PHIL. iii. 10.

DO I, like Paul, desire above all things, to know Christ; to believe in him; to have an experimental knowledge of him as my Saviour? Am I daily becoming more dead to sin—daily longing for a life of holiness—daily seeking to be conformed to his will, and filled with his Spirit? Do I find him an ever present friend, and comforter, and guide; and do I endeavor in all things to live for him?

Christ is all that you need. He has all that you can want. Live upon him; walk with him; work for him; aim in everything to glorify him, and he will be all in all to you.—JAMES SMITH.

Get Christ for your portion, and you have all; infinite wisdom to direct, knowledge to teach, mercy to pity, love to care for and comfort, and power to protect and keep and save you.—JOHN MASON.

“Do you feel that you love Christ?” was asked of an aged and dying Christian. “Better than that,” was the reply, “Christ loves me.” Rest in Christ’s love to you, rather than in your love to him.

Gladly the joys of earth we leave,
Wealth, pleasure, faime—for thee alone;
To thee our will, soul, flesh, we give;
Oh, take and seal them for thine own!
From self and sin, Oh, set us free
That we may find our all in thee!

—MONTAGUE.

I am the Lord, I change not.—MAL. iii. 6.

IS it a constant source of comfort to me to know that as God is unchangeable, so are his promises? As he has promised to teach, guide, provide for, and save me, will he not do it? And as he is unchangeable in his words of comfort, do I take warning from the fact that he is so in his words of admonition? And does this thought make me watchful against sin?

Whoever is changeable, God is not; whoever false, he is true; whoever may deceive, he is faithful. He will abide by his word; make good his promises; be ever mindful of his covenant. He changes not in his love, which is eternal; in his purposes, which are from everlasting; in his relation to us, for he is our Father; in his sympathy, by which he feels for us in every joy and sorrow. As he is faithful to us, let us be so to him.—JAMES SMITH.

He who looks upon Christ through frames and feelings, is like one who sees the sun on the water, and so sees it quivering and moving as the water moves. But he that looks upon him in the glass of his word by faith, sees him for ever the same.—NOTTIDGE.

Frames and feelings fluctuate;
These thy Saviour ne'er can be;
Love itself may oft abate;
Learn thyself in Christ to see;
Then be feelings what they will,
Jesus is thy Saviour still.

Even Christ pleased not himself.—ROM. xv. 3.

UGHT not the self-denial of Christ to be the most powerful and effective argument against selfishness in his followers? Do I seek my own comfort, ease, and pleasure before that of others? Is self-gratification or the good of others first in my thoughts? Do I cherish the spirit, and imitate the example of the Saviour in all my relations to my fellow-men?

To feel much for others, and little for ourselves, to restrain our selfish, and indulge our benevolent affections, to deny self that we may do good to all about us, is the perfection of human nature.—ADAM SMITH.

The will of God, is a path leading straight to him. Self-will is directly contrary to it: it leads from God. We must choose one or the other.—JOHN WESLEY.

I expect to go through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.—WM. PENN.

It was no path of flowers,
Through this dark world of ours,
Beloved of the Father, thou didst tread,
And shall we in dismay,
Shrink from the narrow way,
Though clouds and darkness are around it spread?

Meditate upon these things.—1 TIM. iv. 15.

DO I meditate often, and seriously on the great truths and duties of God's word? And is it my earnest desire and prayer that all my meditations may be pleasing to God, and profitable to myself? Do I love to dwell on God's character, his will, his goodness and mercy, and on all his providential dealings with me? And do I find in all reason for love and devout thankfulness, and food for my own growth in the divine life, and in preparation for heaven?

Be led by the Spirit to meditate very frequently on the things of God. Make a journey every day to the three mountains. Go to Sinai, and see your sins. Go to Calvary, and behold the Lamb of God. Go to Zion, and view the heavenly city. And let each view lead you to lean more entirely on Christ.—EVERARD.

Meditation is prayer's handmaid, to wait on it both before and after performance. It is as the plow before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer; and as the harrow, to cover the seed when it is sown.
—GURNALL.

Work thou in me, and heavenward guide
My thoughts and wishes, that my heart
Waver no more, nor turn aside,
But fix for ever where thou art.
Aid me to meditate thy ways;
And thus for ever live thy praise.

We also believe, and therefore speak.—2 COR. iv. 13.

DO I find that my faith is, through grace, a sovereign cordial to my courage and strength as a soldier of the cross, and a powerful antidote against the despondency and sadness which trial and sorrow tend to produce? In the hour of temptation am I sustained by faith, and so kept faithful in duty? And believing myself, do I endeavor to lead others to the same faith, that they may partake of its blessings?

Faith, resting calmly upon God, is victorious over all besides. It is God who fights for the believer, with the believer, and in the believer. Faith does nothing alone, or of itself, but everything under God, by God, and through God.—STOUGHTON.

As we receive help and encouragement from the good words and examples of others, so we should be most careful to give good words and examples to others.—M. HENRY.

Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but a taking God at his word.—EVANS.

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would gracious be;
With thy words that help and heal,
Would thy life in mine reveal;
And with actions bold and meek,
Would for Christ, my Saviour, speak.

—LYNCH.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.—Ps. lv. 22.

DO I take God at his word, and roll all my burdens upon him? Or do I keep a part of them for myself, trying to bear some in my own strength? Do I stay myself, in all circumstances, on his care and promise, resting in the assurance that all shall work for good if I trust him? Have I ever found my Father's promise to fail? Why should I, for a moment, doubt him in this?

God has not promised to free us immediately from the trouble that gives rise to our cares and fears; but he will provide that we be not tempted above what we are able to bear.—M. HENRY.

One of the greatest lessons of life for the child of God, is, to let his heavenly Father carry every burden; to cast all his care on him. And the godly do much wrong themselves by not improving this their sweet privilege. They too often forget this their sweet way, and fret themselves to no purpose; wrestle with their burdens themselves, and do not entirely and freely roll them over on God.—LEIGHTON.

Say not, my soul, from whence,
Can God relieve my care?
Remember that omnipotence
Has servants everywhere.—LYNCH.

When God shall cease his word to keep,
Or when his watchful eye can sleep,
My heart may then forget her faith,
And sink 'neath sorrow—fail in death.

Oh that I had wings like a dove ! For then would I fly away, and be at rest.—Ps. lv. 6.

IS my present life such as becomes one who hopes soon to exchange its toils and troubles for perfect and everlasting rest? Does the thought of being for ever with the Lord, make heaven dear to me? When weary with the labors, and pressed with the burdens of the day, does the knowledge that they will soon be ended, help me to work more diligently, bear more cheerfully, and look forward more hopefully, and thankfully, to the end? —

Many persons wish to enjoy heaven at last, who have no desire to be heavenly-minded yet. They would like the rest and blessedness of heaven, but have no wish for that holiness which is the only preparation for enjoying heaven, and the only evidence of fitness for it. *

“ My chief conception of heaven,” said Robert Hall, “ is rest;” “ and mine,” said Wilberforce, “ is love.” It is both. It is the union of perfect love with perfect rest: of love going forth in holy service, and rest in the service and blessedness of perfect love. *

One sweetly solemn thought, comes to me o'er and o'er,
I'm nearer to my home to-day, than ever I've been
before !

Nearer my Father's house, where the many mansions
be;

Nearer the great white throne; nearer the jasper sea!
Nearer the bound of life, where I lay my burdens down;
Nearer leaving each cross of grief; nearer to wearing
my crown !—PHŒBE CARY.

To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.—HEB. iii. 7, 8.

HAVE I gladly and thankfully accepted the offer of salvation, or am I still delaying, and so trifling with it? Am I diligent and faithful in the service of Christ, or still living for self, and the world, and sin? And if, under all the light and appeals of divine truth, my heart becomes hardened, is it not my own act and choice, and will not the blame and loss and guilt be mine for ever?

If the very idea of having a hard heart makes you tremble, it is a sure sign that your heart is not hard.

—ST. BERNARD.

Late repentance should be carefully distinguished from delayed repentance. True repentance is never too late; but delayed repentance is seldom true. The penitent thief's repentance was late, but we have no evidence that it was delayed when the truth was made clear to him.—HENRY.

I have seen many dying beds; I have seen many in all stages of their last sickness, but never have I yet seen a dying bed which seemed to me to be a proper place to make preparation for eternity.—ALBERT BARNES.

Behold a Stranger at the door!
He gently knocks; has knocked before;
Has waited long; is waiting still;
You treat no other friend so ill.
Admit him ere his anger burn;
His feet departed, ne'er return;
Admit him, or the hour's at hand,
You'll at his door rejected stand.—GREGG.

*Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house.—
Ps. xxvi. 8.*

CAN I truly say, that I love the house of God? Do I esteem it a precious privilege to attend within its walls; to join in its praises; to unite in its supplications; to hear its sacred lessons of truth and duty, that I may become wiser and better—better fitted for God's service and for heaven? Do I pray for God's blessing on all its services, and seek to be profited by them? Do I endeavor to lead others with me to the house of God?

Blessed day! when resting from the toils of the week, we may go up to the house of God, and uniting with our fellow-Christians, may with one heart, supplicate the same mercies, pour forth the same praises, hearken to the same great truths, be pointed to the same Saviour, and prepared for the same heaven. *

Through the week we go down into the valleys of care and shadow and toil. But our Sabbaths should be hills of light and joy in God's presence. And so, as time rolls by, we shall go from mountain top to mountain top, till at last we catch the glory of the gate, and enter in, to go no more out for ever!

And so there shines one day in seven,
Bright with the special mark of heaven;
That we, with love and praise, may dwell
On him who loveth us so well;
And foretastes gain, in worship blest,
Of heaven's eternal day of rest!

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.—JER. xvii. 9.

DO I acknowledge and feel, that there are more seeds of sinfulness in my heart than at once spring up and bear fruit in conduct? Does not my heart too often put evil for good and good for evil? Am I not blind to my own besetting sins, and eagle-eyed to the sins of others? Do I feel that I do not fully know my heart, and its weakness in the hour of temptation? And do I constantly pray that God would search and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting?

There is tinder enough in the best men's hearts, to light a fire that would burn to the lowest hell, if God did not quench the sparks. There is enough corruption, depravity, and wickedness in the heart of the holiest man alive, to destroy him for ever, if God's free and sovereign grace did not prevent.—SPURGEON.

The seriousness of any sin is not to be judged by the greatness of the incentive, or the grossness of the action. When the Lord says, "Thou shalt not," and his rebellious creature says, "I will," whether the contest be about an apple or a kingdom, it is stubbornness and rebellion.—SCOTT.

Lord, with this guilty heart of mine,
To thy dear cross I flee;
And to thy grace my soul resign,
To be renewed by thee.
Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest,
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Saviour's breast.—WATTS.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
—PROV. xviii. 24.

HAVE I taken Christ as my Saviour, and so, as my dearest friend? Do I find comfort in the fact that he is the loving, sympathizing, unfailing friend of his people? And do I give him the only return that he asks—the full confidence and affection of a loving and grateful heart? Am I truly thankful for the inestimable blessings which this Friend of friends gave his life to purchase for me? Does my life manifest my love to him?

The Christian should never be dejected under affliction, because he has God for his friend, and father, and everlasting portion.—SPENCER.

He who has found the Saviour, has found something more than a wise counselor, a moral remedy, or a good physician. He has found an all-sufficient, never-failing, and ever-sympathizing friend.—HAMILTON.

When President Edwards came to die, after bidding all his relatives farewell, his last words were, “And now where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never-failing friend?” and so saying he sweetly fell asleep. Jesus is a friend, ever near and ever true; the best friend for earth or heaven.—FOSTER.

Weak though we are, Christ still is near,
To lead, console, defend;
In all our sorrow, sin, and fear,
Our all-sufficient friend.
In highest heaven, or lowliest sod,
The surest, truest friend is God!

It is I; be not afraid.—MATT. xiv. 27.

TN this assurance of the blessed Saviour, have I not the strongest ground of confidence that he will ever be a hiding-place from the storm, and a refuge from the tempest? No matter how the winds of trouble may sweep, or the waves of calamity may roar, is not Christ with his disciples, as of old, rebuking the storm, and giving the assurance of safety and peace? Do I look away from the clouds and darkness that so often gather, to my ever-present Saviour, and never lose my trust in him?

Tribulation cannot separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But the love of God will, in the end, separate you from tribulation, and bring you out of it, and give you fullness of joy.

—J. HEWITSON.

Do thy part with industry, and leave the event with God. I have seen matters fall out so unexpectedly, that they have taught me, in all affairs, neither to despair nor presume; not to despair, for God can help me; not to presume, for God can cross me. I will never presume, because I am a man. I will never despair, because I have a God.—FELTHAM.

God is my trust! my soul, be not afraid!

Thy helper will abide.

“I’ll not forsake thee!” he has kindly said,

He’s ever at my side;

In strength or weakness will stand by me;

No real good will he deny me;

In everything that can betide me,

God is my trust!

My Lord and my God.—JOHN xx. 28.

DO I realize that if I am without faith, then I am without Christ, or grace, or hope, or heaven? And feeling my sinfulness, do I take Christ as my Lord and my God? Is he my wisdom, to enlighten my righteousness, to justify and pardon; my sanctification, to purify and cleanse my soul; my redemption, to complete the work of grace in bringing me safely to heaven? Do I look to him for all that I need for time and eternity?

Him whom we have learned to trust as our Saviour, and love as our friend, and follow as our master, and adore as our divine Redeemer, with Thomas, in wonder and worship, we also hail as our Lord and our God.

—JAMES HAMILTON.

Acknowledge Christ as your Lord and your God. And in every duty, look to him; before duty, to perform; in duty, to assist; after duty, to accept. Look not a moment away from Christ. Look not upon sin only, but upon Christ as the Saviour from its power.

God of my salvation, hear,
And help me to believe;
Simply to thee I draw near
Thy blessing to receive.
Full of guilt, alas! I am,
But to thee for refuge flee;
Friend of sinners! spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me!

We walk by faith; not by sight.—2 COR. v. 7.

AM I content to leave the explanation of life's many mysteries till I reach the unseen world, where I shall know even as I am known? For the present, do I endeavor to trust, knowing that now is the trial of my faith, and that God knows far better than I can, what is best for me here? In all circumstances do I rejoice that he is on the throne, and rely on his wisdom and goodness as ordering all for the good of those that trust him?

Faith is the root of all blessings. Believe, and you shall be saved. Believe, and you must needs be satisfied. Believe, and you cannot choose but be comforted and happy —JEREMY TAYLOR.

Faith though weak, is still faith; a glimmering taper, if not a glowing torch: but the taper may give light as truly as the torch, though not so brightly.—H. MULLER.

Trust him when you cannot trace him. Do not try to penetrate the cloud which he brings over you, and to look through it. Rather keep your eye fixed steadily on the bow that is on the cloud. The mystery is God's: the promise is yours.—MACDUFF.

Be trustful; cheerful faith will bring
A living joy to thee,
And make thy life a hymn of praise,
From doubt and murmurs free;
Whilst, like the sunbeams, thou wilt bless,
And bring to others happiness.

Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—JOHN xxi. 17.

KNOWING in my own experience the blessedness of the gospel, do I endeavor to make its truth known to others, and to lead them to the Saviour in whom is all my trust? Do my words spring from sincere interest in their spiritual welfare? Is my heart, in speaking, deeply imbued with the love of Christ? Is my manner in keeping with my teaching? Does my life impress the lessons of my lips?

If the world is ever to be conquered for our Lord, it is not by ministers, or office-bearers, or the great and noble and mighty, but by every Christian man and woman being a working-member; doing their own work; filling their own sphere; each speaking, and working, and living for Christ, in all circumstances, and every day.—DR. GUTHRIE.

Every faithful Christian should be a teacher of Bible truth, and an example of Bible duty. To individual faithfulness and effort, God has committed the welfare of others. If we truly love Christ and prize the salvation he offers, we shall endeavor to lead others to him.

*

Thy love
Shall chant thine own beatitudes,
After its own life working. A child kiss,
Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad:
A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich:
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong:
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service thou dost render.—E. BROWNING.

None shall be alone in his appointed time.—ISA.
xiv. 31.

WHEN, through circumstances, I may be outwardly alone, does the sense of God's presence give me fellowship with him, and so afford peace and joy? Do I know, by experience, the truthfulness of the Saviour's promise, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"? In solitude do I hold conscious communion with him, and so find both strength and comfort to my soul? Is it not comforting to know that he appoints my hours of loneliness, and that in solitude or depression he is always near?

The Lord thinks upon you; he is with you at all times; he will never leave or forsake you. He is a friend, a brother, a Lord: a friend, to guide you with ecounsel; a brother, to sympathize with you in loneliness or sorrow; a Lord, to defend you from evil, and to make all things work together for your good. *

I am as certain as that I live, that nothing is so near to me as God. As my Father, and as my best and truest Friend, he is near to me in every bright and joyous, and in every clouded and trying scene of life.

—TAULER.

Alone! believer, child of God?

It is not so; it cannot be!

Though all were cold beneath the sod,

Who ever loved or thought of thee,

Yet still the high and holy One,

Is with thee—will be, to the end.—

Thou hast the Father and the Son;

Art thou alone with such a Friend?

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.—ISA. ii. 5.

DO I make real and diligent use of the light which God has given to enable me to walk safely through the darkness of this world to the realms of endless day? Do I open the eyes of my conscience and heart to the light of revelation? Do I walk in that light myself, and endeavor to lead others to walk in it? Am I truly grateful for my many privileges and means of grace? And is my gratitude manifest in a life of holy obedience?

If we walk in the light of God's truth and love, that light will not merely beam on our path, but it will be reflected from ourselves to others. Our brightness will be seen; and as the streaming rays from the lighthouse reach far out to sea, where troubled mariners are seeking the shore, so the light of our life will point men to the haven of rest. *

Keep your face toward the Sun of righteousness, and you will have before you nothing but its bright light and comforting heat. But turn your back to it, and before you will be shadows and darkness, and the chill will enter your soul.—SPENCER.

Walk but with God, from darkness light shall shine,
And out of present sorrows, joy shall rise.
Trust, then, in faith, the guardian hand divine;
And know that God, supremely good and wise,
Will pour his light, and lead thee to the skies.

The Lord will be the hope of his people.—JOEL iii. 16.

AM I indeed one of the Lord's people? Is my life such as to give evidence to myself and to others, that my faith is a living faith, and my hope that good hope which is an anchor to the soul? In perplexity, or affliction, or trouble, do I find that the Lord is my hope, and that I am sustained and comforted by my trust in him?

He that has taken the Lord for his hope, has within him the germ of undying courage and joy. In darkness he has light; in despondency, support; in conflict, courage; in affliction, comfort; in death, the prospect of eternal life.—T. BROOKS.

As an anchor thrown to the bottom of the sea, holds the ship fast amid storms and tempests, so the Christian's hope penetrates the waves of this troublous world, and holds fast the soul amid the waves of sorrow and sin.—HAVEN.

There are those who sigh that no fond heart is theirs;
None loves them best. O vain and selfish sigh!
Out of his tender love the Father spares
His well-beloved Son for thee to die.
For thee he died; for thee he lives again;
O'er thee he watches in his boundless reign.

—KEBLE.

Try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me.—Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

HAVE I the same consciousness of sincerity and rectitude of purpose which enabled David to appeal to God to search and try his heart? Do I remember that he is omniscient, so that every thought is known to him, and nothing can escape his notice, and that what may be carefully concealed from men, is naked and open before him—the God of infinite purity and holiness? Do I endeavor so to live as to be approved of him?

Let us remember that mere outward reformation differs as much from regeneration, as whitewashing an old rotten house, differs from taking it down and building a new one in its room.—TOPLADY.

Let the Christian often compare his former condition, as a sinner unsaved, with his state as a renewed believer, that his love and gratitude may be excited, and his affections drawn to Him who has wrought the change.—FLAVEL.

O thou, to whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart; it pants for thee;
O burst these bonds and set it free!
Wash out its stains; refine its dross;
Nail its affections to the cross;
Hallow each thought; let all within
Be cleansed, as thou, my Lord, art clean.

—C. WESLEY.

Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.
—Ps. cxlii. 10.

DO I pray not only to know God's will, but for grace to do it? Is it my desire to understand every way of duty, and faithfully to walk in it? If I have taken God for my portion, why should I not depend on him for truth, for instruction, for guidance, or help that I may do all his will? Do I earnestly pray for his Spirit to incline and lead me to holy living, that I may honor him, and do good to men?

When harassed by doubt or unbelief—when books do not satisfy, and reasonings are not conclusive, commit the matter to the Lord; and as he sends forth his Spirit of truth, and by that best of casuists leads you to the ways of uprightness, you will find rest to your soul.

Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in so doing, you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about. Practice what you know, and it will help to make clear what now you do not know.—REMBRANDT.

Lead me, O Christ, 'mid doubt, or circling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step's enough for me.

Be clothed with humility.—1 PET. v. 5.

AS Christ, the Lord of life and glory, humbled himself even to the death of the cross, does it not become us to imitate his example,—to put away high and proud thoughts, and to be meek and lowly in heart and conduct? Do I cherish this spirit, prayerfully endeavoring to lay aside self-exalting thoughts, and to walk humbly before God? Am I willing to be made all things to all men, if so I may do good, and glorify my divine Master?

I remember the thoughts I used to have of holiness; but no part of it had, to me, so great a sense of lowliness as humility and brokenness of heart; and there was nothing I so longed for. My heart panted after this, to be low in the dust, that I might be nothing, and that God might be all; that I might become a little child.—PRES. EDWARDS.

Humility is not self-contempt, or groveling in the dust of blind abasement. It is but a just self-estimate before God and man; seeing ourselves just as God sees us. We should cherish its spirit and practice it in conduct, for it is the noblest and happiest state of the soul. If truly humble, our hearts will be right toward God, and our life will go forth in kindness and love to men

*

A little while, O Lord, and we
In glory shall behold thy face:
Teach us till then, to take with thee,
Thy place on earth—the lowest place.

God many a spiritual house has reared, but never one,
Where lowliness was not first laid—the corner stone

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.
—MATT. xxvi. 41.

AM I sufficiently watchful against the power of temptation? And while I watch against it, do I earnestly pray to be kept from its influence? Is there not deep and special meaning in the repeated injunctions of Christ, that we do both? Do I study to know the sins that easily beset me within, and the perils to which I am exposed without? And for safety from both, do I both watch and pray?

Strive to make prayer and reading and holy company your delight, and little by little your soul shall be filled with the sweetness of Christ.—RUTHERFORD.

We should watch against dangers; watch for opportunities of usefulness; watch for all means of spiritual improvement and growth; watch for all sources of increase in the knowledge of Christ, and for all that may prepare us for heaven.—J. BATE.

We should act with as much energy as those who expect everything for themselves; and we should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect everything from God.—COLTON.

Seek thou thy God alone by prayer,
And thou mayest doubt, perchance despair;
But seek him by sincere endeavor,
And thou shalt find him gracious ever.
Let prayer and toil both seek thine end,
The blessing surely will descend.

The Lord God will enlighten my darkness.—Ps xviii. 28.

DO I think too much of earthly teachers, and depend too much on their teaching, instead of going directly, and at all times, to Him who is the light, as well as life of the world? Do I bear in mind that he cannot err; and do I go to his word, and watch his providence, that I may know, always, the way of truth and duty? In all circumstances of doubt or darkness or difficulty, do I look to God for light and guidance, and patiently wait till he makes plain my way? —

The philosophers, as Varro tells us, counted up three hundred and twenty answers to the question, “What is the supreme good?” How needful, then, is a divine revelation, to make plain what is the true end of our being! *

We may read many truths in the Bible, but we never know them savingly till God by his Spirit shines into our hearts. If we sincerely seek light from above, it will always be given us.

Let Christ be to you really the Son of God, the Saviour, and his light will dispel the darkness, and his Spirit lead you into all truth.—D'AUBIGNE.

Father! O Father! though the way is black,
Keep me still near and guide me on to thee;
Oft I am falling, for the untrodden track
Is rough, and full of stones that weary me.
Grant me thy strength, I then shall persevere,
And safely reach at last the heavenly sphere.

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.—2 COR. xii. 7.

WHEN temptations or trials press upon my soul with the sharpness of thorns, do I remember that God sends, or permits them, to try my faith, and to keep me humble? And do I acknowledge his hand, and see his design in all, and pray for grace wisely to improve under the dealings of his providence, that they may lead me nearer to him, and better fit me for heaven?

Life has such hard conditions to us sinners, that every dear and precious gift, every rare virtue, every pleasant faculty, every genial endowment, love, hope, joy, wit, sprightliness, benevolence, must sometimes be put into the crucible to distill the one elixir—patience and submission.—DODGE.

Real Christian humility is a grace of the Spirit, and has its seat in the heart. It is gained more by believing on Christ and looking to him, than by dwelling upon our sins and unworthiness.

Thou knowest I need a cross to bear;
And needful strokes thou dost not spare,
To keep me near thy side.
But when I see the chastening rod
In thy pierced hand, my Lord, my God,
I then feel satisfied!—C. WILKINS.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—LUKE xi. 9.

DO not these promises give the strongest encouragement at all times to come boldly to the throne of grace? And if the thought of a throne inspires awe, is not the fact that it is a throne of grace, full of encouragement even to the chief of sinners? Do I then come diligently, earnestly, often, to the mercy-seat, that I may receive pardon, grace, and strength, according to my need?

A holy boldness, a chastened familiarity, is the true spirit of prayer. When God pours out his Spirit on man, then man will pour out his heart before God. The breath of prayer comes from the life of faith.

—JOHN MASON.

That is a false humility, which, because it is unworthy of the gifts of God, dares not expect them. True humility consists in a deep view of our utter unworthiness and in an absolute abandonment of self to God, without the slightest doubt that he will do great things for us.—FENELOW.

God is in the loneliest spot
Present, though thou see him not;
Morning vows and evening prayer
Make a Bethel everywhere.
Go where duty guides thy feet:
There good angels thou shalt meet;
Hosts of God thou canst not see,
Watch thy steps and wait on thee.

The entrance of thy words giveth light.—Ps. cxix. 130.

DO I make the word of God my diligent and prayerful study? Do I feel that my heavenly Father is speaking to me personally in its pages, making clear his truth, making plain the way of my duty, and giving me all the encouragement I need as I press on in his service? Is it my heartfelt desire and earnest prayer, that the knowledge of God's word should not only enter my head, but be felt in my heart, and be manifest in my life?

In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue.—J. Q. ADAMS.

It is a belief in the Bible, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life.—GOETHE.

Wilmot, the infidel, when dying, laid his trembling, emaciated hand on the Bible, and exclaimed solemnly and with unwonted energy, "The only objection against this book, is a bad life."

The light of reason cannot give
Life to my soul.

Jesus alone can make me truly live.

One glance of his can make my spirit whole.
Arise, O Christ, I pray thee, then, and shine
On this poor, longing, waiting heart of mine.

—RICHTER.

In your patience possess ye your souls.—LUKE xxi. 19.

DO I remember that it is a high attainment, as well as a binding duty, to rule my own spirit—to keep the passions and emotions of my heart under control? Do I prayerfully cultivate patience? Am I patient under rebuke, not answering again; patient under injury, blessing those that hate me; patient under provocation, remembering Him, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; patient in adversity or suffering, ready to wait the Lord's time for deliverance; patient in duty, faithfully enduring to the end?

Christ went to heaven through many a wrong and many a suffering. His visage and countenance were all marred, more than the sons of men. You may not see above your Master.—RUTHERFORD.

In suffering times, set patience on the guard for the preserving of your souls. By it keep out all those impressions which would ruffle you, and put you out of temper. In all things run with patience the race set before you in Christ Jesus, and the crown shall be yours in the end.

Enduring wrong, reproach, or grief,
With sweet and steadfast will;
Loving and blessing those who hate,
Returning good for ill;
Patient in suffering, toil, or loss,
And glorying only in the cross!

There is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.—1 TIM. ii. 5.

FEELING my sinfulness, do I look to Christ only for salvation? Do I see and feel that mere repentance for the past, or morality, or any thing that I can do, cannot avail to save me? And do I rest all my hopes on the atoning death and meritorious intercession of Jesus? And though I would be obedient and holy, is it as the fruit of love to the Saviour, and not as the ground of reliance for salvation? Do all my hopes rest on Christ, and only on him?

If you seek to divide the work of salvation with any other, whether in heaven or earth, you seek to rob Christ of his glory as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. His is the only name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved.—PAYSON.

“For Christ’s sake,” is only another expression for the great truth, that all our holy emotions and expectations are dependent on him; that his death was a sacrifice for our sins; and in his mercy is our only hope. To feel reliance on his merit, and to trust only in his name, is the mark of true Christian experience. The man who does not feel this, is dead.—WALKER.

Jesus, my great high priest,
Hath shed his blood, and died :
My guilty conscience needs
No sacrifice beside.
His precious blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.

—WATTS.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.—2 COR. x. 5.

DO I endeavor, in humble dependence on Christ, to crucify every sinful thought, and feeling, and purpose, that I may humbly and faithfully serve him? Do I feel my ignorance, and go to him for light; my weakness, and go to him for strength; my proneness to wander, and constantly pray that he will keep me? Vain imaginations, proud reasonings, high thoughts of self—all these do I sacrifice at the cross?

The happiness of man consists not in exemption from trials, but in having his will swallowed up in the will of God.

From the altars of our hearts let the incense of holy meditation, and fervent prayer, and cheerful thanksgiving ever be ascending. Let the pure lights of faith and holy living shine, and never be extinguished. Let our souls be refreshed and strengthened by the Bread of Life. Let us remember thy sacred laws and treasure up thine unfailing promises. Suffer nothing unclean to enter into our souls. Keep us from the power of temptation. Sanctify us to thyself, and be thou ever sanctified in us.

If in our daily task our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves—a road
To bring us daily nearer God.—KEBLE.

Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.—MATT. vi. 32.

DO I realize that God, my heavenly Father, knows all my wants even better than I do myself; that no bodily or temporal want is too trivial to be overlooked by him? If he clothes the lilies with beauty, and feeds the ravens when they cry, much more does he not care for his children? Shall I not, then, go to him with every care, and want, and trouble, knowing that, from his abundant fullness, he will provide for all that I need?

Thy Marahs, as well as Elims, are appointed by him. His gracious pillar-cloud is before thee. Follow it through sunshine and storm, and it will not lead thee astray. He, thy heavenly Father, knoweth that you have need of all these things.—MACDUFF.

Your Father is so rich that he owns everything; so wise, that he knows everything; so mighty, that he can do everything; so generous, that he will not withhold any good thing from them that love him. Surely, then, you can dismiss all care, and silence every murmur, and keep your heart in perfect peace.—D. MARCH.

Commit thou all thy wants
 And ways into his hands,
 To His sure truth and tender care,
 Who earth and heaven commands.
 No profit canst thou gain
 By self-consuming care;
 To him commend thy cause, his ear
 Attends thy softest prayer.

—GERHARDT.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.—HEB. xiii. 8.

DO I practically believe in the unchangeableness of Christ, and ever trust him as my unchanging Redeemer? Does this belief at all times give me confidence and comfort, especially in the day of darkness and trial? Though my heart may be changeable, and its moods and feelings fluctuate, do I still feel that my Saviour changes not, and that his love is for ever the same? Do I therefore endeavor to look away from self, to Christ, the unchanging Rock?

God's promises, like himself, are from everlasting to everlasting. The mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but his word abideth for ever. No creature in all the world, or even in lying, audacious hell, shall ever say, that he trusted in God and was disappointed.—BEECHER.

Whoever is changeable, God is unchanging. Whoever is false, God is true. Whoever may deceive, God is faithful. He will abide by his word; make good his promises, and ever be mindful of his covenant. So that we may ever, and most safely trust in him.—J. SMITH.

Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.
Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done.

—COWPER.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.—2 COR. vii. 10.

HAVE I felt that godly sorrow for sin, and that deep humiliation in view of it, which are necessary to true repentance? Has it wrought in me “indignation” at sin? Has it wrought “fear”—the fear of distrust, not of God, but of myself? Has it wrought a “vehement desire” after thorough reformation of heart and life? Has it led me to turn from sin, not merely because it is ruinous, but because it is wrong, and offensive to God?

Repentance is not merely an act: it is a habit, leading us more and more to turn from the ways of sin, to the ways of righteousness. True repentance, says Ambrose, is to cease from sin; and as long as we are subject to sin, so long we must be striving to cease from it.

*

I hope to continue my penitence to the very end of life; for every day I find I am a sinner, and every day I need to repent:—and so by God’s help I mean to carry my repentance to the very gates of heaven. If I repent every day for the sins of every day, when I come to die I shall have the sin of but one day to repent of.—PHILIP HENRY.

A broken heart, O Lord,
Thou never wilt despise;
'Tis written in thy holy word
 This is the sacrifice
That thou in Christ wilt always own,
The broken, contrite heart alone!

I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.
—Ps. xvii. 15.

DO I not find that the world, with all that it offers, cannot satisfy the soul? Even if it were satisfying, is it not unsure? And even if sure for a time, will it not soon pass away? Do I then look for abiding happiness only in Christ? Do I feel that only his love can satisfy me, both now and for ever? All my hopes do I rest on him?

I have seen much of life, and have found, as you will find, that every one has something in this world, either real or imaginary, that keeps him from being completely happy here.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Here, on earth, we are never completely satisfied, either with ourselves, or the external circumstances of life. But in heaven we shall be, perfectly: satisfied with all the past, God's ways will be seen to have been faithful and true; satisfied with ourselves, or rather with all the grace of God has made us; satisfied with our associates—the holy ones of heaven; satisfied with our employments—serving and praising God; satisfied with our prospects—eternal and ever-increasing blessedness and glory.

*

There is a land where every pulse is thrilling

With raptures earth's sojourners never know,
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,

And peacefully life's time-tossed currents flow.

Thither my weak and weary steps are tending;

Saviour and Lord, with thy frail child abide;
Guide me toward home, where, all my wanderings
ended,

I there shall see thee, and be satisfied!

Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust.
—Ps. xl. 4.

DO I so trust in the Lord as to put away anxiety for the future, leaving to the grace and strength promised for the morrow, the doing of the morrow's work, and the bearing of the morrow's burdens? Since God has promised to provide for every day's necessities as they arise, why should I trouble myself with anxieties or fears, and thus waste the strength that is needed for duty and conflict?

Anxiety is the poison of human life. It is the parent of many sins, and of more miseries. It cannot alter the course, or unravel the intricacy of human events. Why then allow it, when we know that all the future is guided by a Father's hand?—
BLAIR.

He who anticipates and fears calamities, suffers them twice over.—PORTEUS.

That we forget the evils of the past, and are ignorant of those of the future, is a merciful provision of Providence, to keep us alike from sad and bitter recollections and overwhelming anxieties and fears. *

Leave the future; let it rest
Simply on the Saviour's will:
Leave the future; they are blest,
Who confiding, hoping still,
Trust his mercy
To preserve from every ill.

I lead in the way of righteousness.—PROV. viii. 25.

AM I willing to be led in the way of righteousness? Do I go to the Bible to know what is that way, and earnestly pray for the aid of the Holy Spirit to enable me to walk in it? Am I thankful that I have a divine Leader, who is both able and willing to lead me at every step? And do I show my thankfulness by rejoicing to be led by him, as a child by a loving father?

Thou wouldest willingly go to heaven. What better guide can you have than Him who dwells there? If he lead thee at times by rough and thorny paths, it is because he knows it is the nearest way.—HALL.

We cannot always be upon the mount, but we can keep in the narrow way, and follow Him who leads us in it.

*

The way to heaven is narrow and difficult. Sin is to be forsaken, the world overcome, Satan resisted, self denied, duties to be diligently performed, Christ to be faithfully followed. To walk in it demands effort, but it leads to everlasting life.

*

Teach me to live thy purpose to fulfill ;
Bright for thy glory let my taper shine ;
Each day renew this sinful, stubborn will ;
Closer round thee my heart's affections twine.
So shall I walk with thee life's daily road ;
So, at its close, shall rise to thee, my God !

Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.—ISA. xxvii. 5.

AM I at peace with God through faith in Christ Jesus? And if reconciled to him through the blood of the cross, do I endeavor so to live as to keep a conscience void of offence toward both God and man, that my peace may not be broken, through a sense of guilt? Do I so commit everything to God, and by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, so make all my wants known to him, that his peace, which passes all understanding, keeps my mind and heart through Christ Jesus?

Peace is the proper result of Christian faith and the Christian temper. It is the great kindness that our religion doth to us, that it brings us to a holy settledness of mind and heart, the happiness of which we call peace.—Bp. PATRICK.

Our peace, if we love God, the prophet says, shall flow like a river. We hear it when we rise in the morning; we hear it in the quiet noon; we hear it when the sun goes down; and if we wake in the night, the sound is still in our ears. The music of God's peace is never unheard in the faithful soul.

“Peace” was the word the Saviour breathed,
When from our world his steps withdrew;
The gift he to his friends bequeathed,
With Calvary and the cross in view!
Redeemer! with adoring love,
Our spirits take thy rich bequest;
The watchword of the host above,
Our passport to their realm of rest!

Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.—MATT. xxiv. 42.

AM I living in constant expectation of the second coming of the Saviour, and in a state of watchfulness and preparation for it? Do I sit so loosely to the world, that the thought of leaving it when God shall call, is not painful to me? Do I so live as to show not only that I desire, but that I am seeking a better country, even an heavenly, so that God is not ashamed to be called my God?

It is the suddenness and uncertainty of the coming of Christ, for either judgment or death, that extends the charge of watchfulness to all, and calls us to keep our souls ever awake; for, if we are unprepared to meet the Lord at death, we can never be ready to meet him in judgment.—WATTS.

My night is far spent; my day is at hand. The wilderness is nearly traversed. Canaan is almost within my view. The everlasting hills are already appearing. What manner of person, then, ought I to be, in all holy conversation and godliness. Mine must be no half discipleship—no service of two masters—no divided heart. What remains of this brief life must be given wholly to the Lord.—H. BONAR

Time's sun is fast setting; its twilight is nigh;
Its evening is falling in cloud o'er the sky;
Its shadows are stretching in ominous gloom;
Its midnight approaches—the midnight of doom!
Then haste, sinner, haste, while there's mercy for thee;
To the cross, as your refuge, in penitence flee!
And with joy lift your heads, O ye ransomed, on high,
For your day of redemption is swift drawing nigh!

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.—MATT. vii. 12.

IS this golden, heavenly rule the foundation of my conduct to and dealing with others? Am I not only just, but loving and kind to all? Am I willing to deny myself to do them good, or even to promote their pleasure? In thought, word, and deed, do I endeavor to act toward all, as I would wish them to do toward myself? Do I as sacredly regard the feelings, reputation, property, and spiritual welfare of others, as I do my own?

If you would know whether your love to God be real, and not counterfeit, mark how you love your neighbor. By how much nearer you are to him in love, by so much the nearer you are to God.—CAUSSIN.

If this golden rule of Christ were but carried out by men, it would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, evil-speaking, theft, adultery, murder, and every evil that afflicts society. It would make every man a happy man, and the wide world a happy world.

*

Oh! were this sacred maxim ours,
How oft life's thorns would change to flowers,
How many a cloud that round us lowers
Would half its darkness lose!
Love o'er our chequered, changeful way,
Would hold its sweet, yet potent sway,
Mighty as noon tide's powerful ray
Yet soft as evening dews.—STORRS.

Be ye thankful.—COL. iii. 15.

DO I study to cherish, habitually, a thankful spirit for all God's mercies to me? Am I thankful for *negative* mercies—that I have been saved from so many evils and sufferings that might have come upon me? Thankful for all *positive* mercies—that so many blessings, temporal and spiritual, have been granted me from on high? And if trials are sent, do I permit them to overcloud past mercies? Or rather, do I, from the past, take thankful courage for the future, knowing that all things work together for good to those that love and trust God? —

Whichever way we turn, we see cause for gratitude. If we look back, goodness and mercy have followed us in the past. If forward, grace is promised for the way, and glory for the end. If within, the Spirit works there. If above, there Christ intercedes. All God's dealings are designed for our good; and if rightly improved, will prepare us for a world where thankfulness shall reign for ever. *

From David, learn to give thanks in everything. Every furrow in the book of Psalms is sown with the seeds of thanksgiving.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

Give thanks to God in everything;
For the cross he bids thee bear,
For the flowers beside thy path that spring,
For the thorns that wound thee there;
For the sunshine beaming on the way,
That makes thy journey sweet,
For the gloom that gathers while yet 'tis day,
For it urges on thy feet.

Uphold me with thy free spirit.—Ps. li. 12.

DO I feel that if left to myself—to dependence on my own powers or purposes, I shall constantly fall into sin? And do I pray that the Holy Spirit may guide and sustain me, and deliver me from its power? Do I aim habitually at a holy and spiritual life, endeavoring to walk in the Spirit, and so to adorn the doctrine of Christ? Do I pray for a serious, firm and faithful spirit, that I may always be kept in the way of duty?

He that is delivered, through Christ, from the condemnation and bondage of sin, is sealed by the Holy Spirit, and so walks before God in righteousness and true holiness.—SUMNER.

Christ says if we continue in his word, then we are his disciples indeed, and we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. And if we do this we shall serve God faithfully, and never grow weary of running in the way of his commandments; but shall manifest to all, that no motive is so powerful as the love which comes from being freely forgiven and accepted in the Beloved.—EVERARD.

In service which thy will appoints,
There are no bonds for me;
For my inmost heart is taught the truth
That makes thy children free;
And a life of self-renouncing love,
Is a life of liberty;
A life of good to all mankind,
And a life that honors thee!

Be careful for nothing.—PHIL. iv. 6.

IN the various changes, uncertainties, difficulties, and trials of life, do I endeavor to keep my mind free from anxious and distracting thoughts and fears? Do I draw the distinction between the proper care of effort and diligence, which is a duty, and the care of weak and sinful distrust, which only unfits the mind for serious thought? Do I bear in mind that it is alike the duty and privilege of the Christian to live without anxiety and corroding care, and that if I seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all things needful and best will be added thereto?

Dust, by its own nature, can rise only so far above the road; and birds which fly higher, never have it on their wings. So the heart that flies high toward heaven escapes the little cares and vexations that brood upon the earth, but which cannot rise above it into the pure air of the upper world.—BEECHER.

We may easily manage, if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed for it. But the load will increase, and be too heavy for us, if we carry yesterday's burden over again to-day, and then add to-morrow's burden to the weight before we are required to bear it.—JOHN NEWTON.

O, ask not thou, “ How shall I bear
The burden of to-morrow ? ”
Sufficient for the day its care,
Its evil and its sorrow.
Thy God imparteth by the way,
Strength that's sufficient for the day.

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.—Ps. li. 15.

DO I pray, not only for God's grace and his gifts, but that I may improve them all to his glory? Do I seek, not only for abundant matter for thanksgiving, but for a heart that is filled with thankfulness? Are the words which my lips utter the sincere expression of gratitude for blessings already bestowed? And when praying for future bestowments, do I offer the sacrifice of grateful praise for past mercies?

Blessings that are won by prayer should ever be worn with thankfulness. Prayer and thanksgiving are like the double motion of the lungs, the air that is sucked in in prayer, is breathed forth again by thanks.—GOODWIN.

To them that are tongue-tied by reason of guilt, the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins says effectually, as Christ said to the deaf and dumb man at Decapolis, "*Ephphatha*," "*Be opened*;" and when the lips are opened what should they speak but the praises of God?—MATTHEW HENRY.

For all the gifts Thou dost impart,
Help me to praise with grateful heart;
My life be praise from day to day,
Till earthly scenes have passed away;
Until in heaven's resplendent light,
Thy glory satisfies my sight!
Then in thy throne's unclouded blaze,
My prayers shall all be changed to praise!

Serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.—DEUT. x. 12.

DO I delight in meditating on God, and in holding communion with him? Do I fear him as great, and love him as good, and devote myself entirely to him as my Benefactor and Father? Do I ask what is his will, and endeavor to do what is most pleasing to him? Do I serve him with all my heart, seeking the advancement of his kingdom among men, and endeavoring so to live as to point others to him?

Religion is believing God's truth, and endeavoring to do God's will. It consists not so much in joyous feelings, as in a life conformed to his teachings, and spent in obedience to his directions. If we have faith in Christ, we shall love him. If we love him, we shall keep his commandments. If we keep his commandments, we shall daily grow in his spirit. *

The religion of some people is constrained; like the cold bath when it is used not for pleasure, but from necessity, for health, into which one goes with reluctance, and is glad when able to get out. But religion to the true believer, is like water to a fish. It is his element. He lives in it, and could not live out of it.

—JOHN NEWTON.

When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where life's pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with earth's meaner things,
It is as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
And tells us whence his treasures are supplied.

—COWPER.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.—Ps. xxiii. 6.

AM I at any time anxious and troubled about the future? Why should I even wish to take it out of God's hands? Has he not promised to provide for all who trust in him? In his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his love, have I not the sure pledge that he will order the future, as he has the past, for my highest good? If I seek first his kingdom and the righteousness thereof, has he not promised that all things needful shall be added thereto?

Life is a warfare, and he who easily desponds, deserts a double duty. He betrays the noblest property of man, which is dauntless resolution, and he rejects or distrusts the providence of that all-gracious Being who guides and rules the universe, and who will surely provide for us all that he sees we need.—

JANE PORTER.

If I am faithful to the duties of the present, God will provide for the future.—BEDELL.

Doth each day upon its wing
Its allotted burden bring?
Load it not beside with sorrow,
Which you fear may come to-morrow.
Strength is promised, strength is given,
When the heart by God is riven;
One thing only, claims thy care,
Seek it, first, by faith and prayer,
And whate'er you need beside
He thou trustest will provide.

God maketh my heart soft.—JOB xxiii. 16.

IS it my daily prayer, that my heart may not only be made soft, but kept so, through the influence of the Holy Spirit? Is my conscience enlightened, tender, sensitive to the very approach of sin? Do I watch against the hardening influences of the world, with its many allurements and temptations? When I read or hear the word of God, do I open my heart to its influence? And by constant communion with Christ, do I live, continually, under the power of his love?

If I would be of one spirit with Christ, I must do all things to please him. This should be my express purpose at all times, lest my own will come to be the rule of my action.—BISHOP WILSON.

Gospel holiness includes a heart broken for sin; a heart broken off from sin; and a heart in perpetual conflict with sin.—MEDLEY.

Pray for a soft heart and a retentive memory. Often speak of the sermons and truths that you hear, and get them harrowed into your hearts, that Satan may be cheated, and your souls be saved.—MCHEYNE.

This heart of stone to flesh convert,
The veil of sin once more remove;
Drop thy warm blood upon my heart,
And melt it with thy dying love.
This rebel heart by love subdue,
And make, and keep it, soft and new.

—WESLEY.

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.—DEUT. viii. 2.

WHEN anxieties disturb, or troubles depress, do I remember God's goodness in the past, and how thus far he has brought me through every difficulty and trial? And does the remembrance fill me with thankfulness for that past, and courage for the future? When a new mercy meets me, do I see a Father's love in it? And do I follow cheerfully where his providence leads, being devoutly grateful that he is guiding me, at every step, to my home in heaven?

Could we look upon our entire life, and take in all its changes as by a single glance, every step would be seen to have been guided by God's mercy. Through our whole career, we should see the angels of divine goodness, guarding from temptation, shielding from danger, supplying our wants, and leading us safely day by day. Not a step but would show us the unbounded goodness of God, and call for constant thankfulness to him.

*

Take up thy burden, ever forward pressing;
Fight thy way onward, fearless day by day;
The steady hand, the tireless heart possessing,
The stars of faith and hope to light the way.
Remember all the way thy God hath led thee,
And while thanksgivings swell thy grateful breast,
Still follow where his fire and cloud shall guide thee,
Through life's lone desert to the heavenly rest.

A little while.—HEB. x. 37.

THOUGH the present conflict may be trying, or even sharp, do I look forward, and strengthen myself with the assurance, that, at most, it is but for a little while? Do I bear with patience the dealings of God's providence, knowing that if I would have an everlasting rest, I must walk in the way to it, and not expect its full blessedness here on earth? Do I long to be fully prepared for that rest, as well as at last to go to it? Do I endeavor to lead others to prize and seek it?

The Jordan is not far off. A few breathings of the air of the wilderness, a few struggles with the difficulties of the way, a few steps across the dreary sands, and then we are at home!—BONAR.

Heaven is a day without a cloud to shade it, or a night to darken it. It is an everlasting hour with Jesus. And we are just as near to it as we are far from self and sin and the world. And it is a solemn and delightful thought, that perhaps nothing but the opaqueness of the bodily eye prevents us from beholding its open gate, and nothing but the dullness of the ear, from hearing its bells of joy, which will soon welcome us to its blessedness.

Only a little longer have we to trust and wait,
Ere we reach the blessed portals, and pass the pearly
gate,
And hear the shout of welcome from the loved ones
gone before,
In the mansions of our Father's house, our home for
evermore!

Cleave unto the Lord.—Acts xi. 23.

DO I endeavor, habitually, with full purpose of heart, to cleave unto the Lord? Do I cordially receive all that he teaches in the way of truth? Do I follow him fully in the way of duty? Am I strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Do I take him for my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? With clear intelligence, with earnest purpose, with deliberate consecration, in devoted love, have I given myself to him, entirely, and for ever?

Think less of self and more of Christ. Cleave to his truth, to his service, to his promises in all their glorious length and breadth. Let it delight the heart of the Saviour to find that you confide in all that he has spoken, and endeavor to do all that he has commanded. *

We must be willing to be, to do, and to suffer all that God requires. This covers time, property, reputation, friends, body, mind, and soul. These are to be held, and used, when, where, and as God sees best. Our consecration of all should be made deliberately, without reserve, in reliance on divine help, and for both time and eternity.

*

Is there a thing beneath the sun,
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
Oh tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motive there.
To know thy power, to hear thy voice,
To taste thy love, be all my choice.

Ye have not passed this way heretofore.—JOSH. iii. 4.

DO I think often on the uncertainties of the future—that I know not what a day may bring forth, and that I must pass through paths entirely unknown to me, on my way to the rest of heaven? Have I that confidence in God's wisdom and goodness, that entire trust in his guidance, that assurance of his favor and support, which will smooth the roughest path, and give light to the darkest way? Do I take comfort from the fact, that though the path is untrodden by me, yet the Saviour trod it while on earth, and that he will guide me safely in it?

We are like little children strayed from home, and God is now fetching us back. But we are ready to turn into any house, and stay and play with everything in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and there is much ado to get us home.—BAXTER.

What a happy thought it is, that though we know not where the way winds, we know where it ends. We cannot track the road, but we know that it leads to heaven. God help us all to pursue the true pilgrimage of a faithful Christian life.—SPURGEON.

With a childlike trust I give my hand,
To the mighty Friend at my side;
And the only thing that to him I say,
As he takes it, is, "Hold me fast,
And suffer me not to lose my way,
But bring me home at last."

Wash and be clean.—2 KINGS v. 13.

AM I willing to be anything, to do anything, to submit to anything, to part with anything, so that my sins may be forgiven, and I may be accepted of God, and be filled with his Spirit? Am I willing to take Christ on his own terms; to be forgiven only through his merits, and cleansed through his truth, by the influence of his Holy Spirit? Do I come to him, "just as I am, without one plea, but that his blood was shed for me," and that he bids me come to him? And thus do I find rest and peace?

As Naaman required no previous cleansing, but had only to obey the simple injunction, "Wash and be clean," so we have only to come to Christ, just as we are, in all our sinfulness, and through his atoning blood we may be cleansed from all our sins, and made heirs of everlasting life.

*

If it be true for me, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," then, by the grace of God, I will henceforth live as a man should live who has been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.—
HEDLEY VICARS.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Vile, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

—TOPLADY.

Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart.—Ps. iv. 4.

DO I love the hour of quiet, serious meditation, when I can commune with my own heart and with divine truth? Do I not only watch against evil thoughts, but endeavor to cherish those which are good? Do I bring all my thoughts, feelings, inclinations and actions, to the test of God's word? More and more do I desire the Spirit of Christ, and ask for grace that I may be like him, and that my life may show forth his praise?

The external acts of religion, reading God's word, bowing the knee in prayer, going to the sanctuary, are easy. But to examine one's motives and feelings, to turn in upon one's own soul, and know how it stands before God, this is not an easy work. If we will not try ourselves, God will try us.

True self-examination lies in ascertaining how nearly Christ is reproduced in ourselves. His life glows in the gospels, and our hearts are the canvas on which we are to copy it. Let us look long and earnestly upon it, and diligently copy, till our lives reflect the whole divine image.

Lord, I am come alone with thee!
Thy voice to hear, thy face to see,
To feel thy presence near.
It is not fancy's ravished dream,
Though wondrous even to faith it seem,
That thou dost wait me here!

—C. WILKINS.

*A word spoken in due season, how good is it.—
PROV. xv. 23.*

DO I realize the importance of right words at the right times? And is it my study and prayer that I may be enabled at all times to speak for good and not for evil? Do I watch for opportunities for speaking words of kindness, of sympathy, of encouragement, of instruction, of warning against evil, of counsel to all that is good? Do I ask for grace wisely to govern my tongue, and profitably to use it, to the glory of God and the good of men, remembering that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man"?

Is there anything better than the tongue? Is it not the bond of society, the organ of truth, the expression of reason, the instrument of kindness to man, and of praise and adoration to God? Is there anything worse than the tongue? Is it not the instrument of strife, the means of contention, the source of division and wars, the organ of error, of lies, of calumny, of blasphemies?—ÆSOP.

Words are things of little cost,
Quickly spoken, quickly lost;
We forget them, but they stand,
Witnesses at God's right hand.
Grant us, Lord, from day to day,
Strength to watch, and grace to pray:
May our lips from sin set free,
Ever speak for truth and thee!

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 COR. iv. 17.

WHEN God sees fit to afflict me, do I look forward to that eternal weight of glory, the thought of which makes present suffering seem light? Does the thought of it help me to be patient under my Father's dealings, knowing that he will remove the trial when he sees it has accomplished its intended end? And do I so receive his kind discipline as by it to be better prepared for the inheritance of the saints in light? —

Afflictions to God's children are like the rough blasts to the ship which bear it the more speedily to the haven of rest.—J. MASON.

Let patience have her perfect work, and bring forth her celestial fruits. When God's people are able and willing to labor and wait, they will find that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and the grand harvest shall come to its reaping, and the day shall broaden to a thousand years, and the thousand years be but a perfect, and finished, and endless day.—MACDONALD.

Beloved children! let the Master train you:
Surely to you he meaneth nothing ill.
His love to you can never know decreasing,
He knoweth what he does—'tis wisdom still.
Patience in heavy days of dark distress,
Works out for you the heavenly blessedness.

—VON SALIS.

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which dieth so easily beset us.—HEB. xii. 1.

IS there any special sin which holds me back when I would press onward and upward in the divine life? Is it an inordinate love of the world—of its riches, honors, enjoyments, or frivolities? Is it a sin of desire, or temper, or want of sincerity and truthfulness? Is it some covered sin of the heart or life, which the eye of the world sees not, but of which conscience testifies I am guilty? And whatever it may be, do I watch and pray against it, and am I striving to overcome it, that it may not separate between me and the Saviour?

One sin unmortified, may destroy the soul. One darling appetite or passion maintained in spite of conscience, will keep us back from the Saviour, and hide the light of his countenance from the soul.—WATSON.

It is of no use to shut all the gates of a city but one against the enemy, if that one is left wide open. And so to break off from many or even most sins, while one besetting sin is allowed and cherished, may ruin us for ever.

*

Think that He, the All-discerning,
Knows thy path at every turning,
Knows each secret hidden stain;
Even what shame would fain gloss over,
He doth easily discover;
All thou dost, to him is plain.

—LYRA GERMANICA.

Let your moderation be known unto all men
PHIL. iv. 5.

DO I endeavor to be moderate, not only as to my passions and appetites, but in all my desires, and in my opinions and judgments of others? If even a heathen could say, that "whatever exceeds the bounds of moderation has an unstable foundation," much more do I learn this lesson from the word of God? Am I slow to form unfavorable judgments; moderate in the use even of lawful enjoyments; steady in the subjection of temper; decided in the control of prejudice and feeling? In all things do I cherish that Christian moderation which is true wisdom as well as true happiness?

Moderation is the centre wherein all philosophies, both divine and human meet. It is the rule of life, the governess of manners, the silken string that runs through the pearl chain of all the virtues, the line under which reason and religion move without any deviation, and therefore most worthy of our best thoughts and of our most careful observance.—BISHOP HALL.

Never hasting, never resting,
With a firm and joyous heart,
Ever onward slowly tending,
Acting aye the Christian's part,
Undepressed by seeming failure,
Unelated by success;
Heights attained, still seeking higher,
Onward, upward, ever press!

The Lord hath done great things for us.—Ps. xxvi. 3.

DO I realize, in all their length, and breadth, and depth, and height, what great things the Lord has done, and is continually doing for me? Am I thankful for his daily and providential care—for life, and health, and food, and raiment, and friends, and for all that makes this life pleasant and dear to me? Above all, am I thankful for his word, and his Son, and his Spirit, and all the means of grace—for the pardon of my sins, and the renewal of my heart, and promise of life everlasting in heaven?

Shall I grudge to spend my life for Him, who did not grudge to shed his life-blood for me?—BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

My heaven is to please God and glorify him; to give all to him; to be wholly devoted to his glory. That is the heaven I long for; that is my religion, and that is my happiness.—D. BRAINERD.

Pardon from an offended God,
Pardon for sins of deepest dye,
Pardon bestowed through Jesus' blood,
Pardon that brings the rebel nigh!
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Lord, save us: we perish.—MATT. viii. 25.

DO I feel my need of the Saviour, and that I shall perish unless he helps and saves me? To him, and only to him, do I look for salvation? And do I fully believe that he is able, and willing, and waiting to save all who will come to him? Do I look to him for the pardon of my sins; for the renovation of my nature; for strength to go on in the way of duty; for the fulfillment of the promise, that he will keep me, through faith, unto everlasting salvation in heaven?

Sinking times are praying times. It was only when the disciples looked at the waves, and heard the winds, that they feared to sink, and cried to Jesus to save them. There is not a want, that we may not turn into a prayer.

*

It is the business of faith to resolve doubts—the doubts and fears of sense in stormy days, so as even then to keep the head above water. Could we believe more, we should doubt less.—M. HENRY.

Jesus, the Lord, will hear
His chosen when they cry;
Yes, though he may a while forbear,
He'll help them from on high.
Then let us earnest cry,
And never faint in prayer;
He sees, he hears, and from on high,
Will make our cause his care.

—NEWTON.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.—ROM. viii. 1.

DOES sin disturb and trouble me, either by its condemnation, or its reigning power? And from it, have I sought and found refuge in Christ? Do I find comfort in the blessed truth, that if I trust in him, it cannot ruin, or even condemn me? Do I bear in mind that he is my righteousness, so that I am justified through him? And that he is my sanctification, so that through him I am made holy, being one with him by faith?

Christ's righteousness, imputed to us through faith, justifies us; and this is the believer's title to heaven. From sanctification, arises our meetness for it.—
MADAN.

Justification is the act of God as a Judge; adoption, his *act* as a Father. By the former, we are discharged from condemnation, and accepted as righteous: by the latter, we are made the children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ for ever.—GUYSE.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find.
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart;
Rise to all eternity!—C. WESLEY.

There is no searching of his understanding.—ISA.
xl. 28.

AMID all the mysteries of nature and grace, am I satisfied to trust both the wisdom and goodness of God, believing that all will be guided and controlled to the best possible ends? Have I not often found that after-events have proved both the wisdom and love of my heavenly Father; and that if my wishes and prayers had been granted, the end would not have justified my hopes? Is it not better to trust the divine leadings, and follow the divine guidance, than to seek a way for myself?

There is a school of philosophy, both wise and beautiful, though it has but too few disciples, which teaches man to say of many things, it may be so, or it may be otherwise. All that I know about it is, that I do not know. I trust to the future to understand it.

I would fain know all that I need, and all that I may. But I leave God's secrets to himself. It is happy for me that God makes me of his court and not of his council.—BISHOP HALL.

A thread of gold hangs midway in the air;
'Oh, let me grasp that thread!' ye cry aloud.
It holds a naked sword behind the cloud:
Ye see not that, ye poor, impassioned hearts,
But struggle for it with your eager hands.
Shall God, the All-wise, answer your demands?
'Twould pierce your souls, and fill you with despair.

The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.—ROM. xvi. 20.

DOES this gracious promise quicken and encourage me in the conflict of life? Do I remember that it is given, not to supersede my watchfulness and care and effort, but to aid me to fight manfully the good fight of faith? Have I not more than once found, that when Satan seemed to have prevailed, and strength to resist was failing, God has in mercy, come to the rescue, and aided me to overcome his power, so that he was indeed put under my feet?

A Christian, who lives here among his enemies should never stir abroad without his guard. If you follow Satan, you will find your tempter a tormentor. If you follow the Spirit, you will find the Counselor a comforter.—J. MASON.

To become like Christ, like him we must be subject to temptation. But as he resisted the tempter, so we must resist, to complete victory, all the temptations that assail us; and if we do it in humble reliance on the divine strength, we shall be safe. *

I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

—H. F. LYTE.

Before I was afflicted, I went astray.—Ps. cxix. 67.

WHEN prosperity smiled upon me, and trouble was not felt, have not the things of God and eternity appeared dim and distant, and comparatively of but little moment? And if God has sent afflictions, has it not been to humble me, and show me the unsatisfying nature of this world, and to point my thoughts to a higher and a better? Has this been their effect? Have they softened my heart, and opened it to the voice of God? Have troubles brought me, like the prodigal, first to myself, and then to my Father?

Sanctified afflictions come, not as lightning to the scathed tree, blasting it more and more, but as the strokes of the sculptor to the marble block, forming it to the image of beauty and loveliness. Let God's presence be felt, and no lot is hard. Let his hand be seen, and no event is unblessed. *

God knoweth well how to use things; and will make us to be obliged to affliction, and to thank him who has made us acquainted with such a rough messenger, sent to lead us to Christ.—RUTHERFORD.

I ask not, "Take away this load of care;"
But for the patient love that all can bear,
And for the faith that whatsoe'er befall
Must needs be good, and for my profit prove,
Since from my Father's heart, most rich in love,
And from his bounteous hands, it cometh all.

Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.—HEB. iii. 6.

HAVE I a strong confidence in the Saviour's power and willingness to save my soul: to pardon my sins; to renew my heart; to sanctify me wholly to himself? Have I come to him in penitence and faith, with deep humility, with grateful love, and with the earnest desire to live for him? Does my faith in him lead me to joy, and peace? And in every duty, or conflict, or joy, or sorrow, do I cling to him as my faithful and loving Redeemer and unchanging Friend?

The strong rope of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of him who is eternal truth. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand and Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature.—RUTHERFORD.

In life, in death, in time, in eternity, O my Saviour, I, thy redeemed servant, thine adopted child, thy covenant disciple, would trust in thee.—O. A. TAYLOR.

Faith makes invisible things, visible; absent things, present; things that are very far off, to be very near to the soul.—T. BROOKS.

I am thine own, O Christ; henceforth entirely thine;
And life from this glad hour—new life, is mine;
No earthly joy can lure my soul from thee;
This deep delight so pure, is heaven to me.
I cannot tell the art by which such bliss is given:
I know thou hast my heart, and I have heaven!

Repent ye, therefore, and be converted.—ACTS iii. 19.

IN the light of God's truth, and through the influence of the Holy Spirit, have I seen and felt my sinfulness as a transgressor of the divine law? Has sin become hateful to me, not merely on account of its consequences, but because by every sin I crucify the Son of God afresh? Does the sincerity of my repentance appear in my avoiding sins that I once committed? Does sin in others give me pain? And do I seek to lead them to forsake it, and to come to Christ as their Saviour?

The true penitent is a convinced, believing soul. An unconvinced sinner cannot be truly penitent; for what the eye sees not, the heart mourns not, and the life forsakes not.—BAILLIE.

Real repentance consists in a heart broken for sin, and so broken from sin. It begins in humiliation of the heart, and ends in reformation of the life. It looks upon the past, with sorrow for the wrong committed; and on the future, with watchfulness, lest it err again. It is “the heart's sorrow, and a clear life ensuing.” It begins in an act, and it continues as a habit of the Christian life.

*

Life's waning hours, like the Sibyl's page,
As they lessen, in value rise:
Then rouse thee and live, nor deem that your age
Stands in the length of your pilgrimage,
But in days that are truly wise;
In days so spent, that each one, in its flight,
Shall bear you on to the world of light!

Ye know not what ye ask.—MATT. xx. 22.

DO I realize that they know not what they ask who seek only personal ends, or who ask for the end while they overlook the means, and so sever what God has joined together? Do I see that I know not what I ask, if I ask for heavenly glory, and yet ask not for faithfulness in duty, and for grace to bear the cross on the way to the crown? Is it my sincere and earnest prayer, that I may be enabled to see that when prayer is not answered as I desire, it is because God knows what is best?

Earthen vessels are not to teach wisdom to their former. If the clay contends with the potter, it may mar the work of him who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. There is no mist over the eyes of him who is wonderful in counsel.—BOSTON.

Sometimes God answers prayers at once, giving us what we seek. Sometimes he gives some better thing than we ask. Sometimes he answers by giving the very contrary of what we wished, and out of that springs the particular end for which we prayed. “I have prayed for thee,” said Christ to Peter, “that thy faith fail not;” and yet Peter fell. But through his fall, in which his faith seemed to fail, he was brought nearer to Christ, and made faithful to the end.

We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good. So find we profit
By losing of our prayers.—SHAKESPEARE.

It is high time to awake out of sleep.—ROM. xiii. 11.

AM I awake to all the great realities of time and eternity? Have I awakened to the fact that I have a soul to save, a God to serve, a world to bless, a hell to escape, a heaven to win? Have I waked from the sleep of sinful security to a life of earnest activity for the good of myself and others? Do I feel that *now* is the time for work, and that there is no certainty in the future? Do I realize that the work to be done is great; that the time for it, is short; that temptations and dangers surround me; and therefore am I awake?

As the sentinel on duty watches against the coming foe, and the sailor on deck against the coming danger, so the Christian should watch against the approach of enemies or dangers, and endeavor, by the grace given from above, to overcome or avoid them. He should watch for opportunities of usefulness; for laying up treasure in heaven; for promoting the good and happiness of others; for growing in grace himself, and leading others to the saving knowledge of Christ.—
J. BATE.

Serve God before the world. Let him not go,
Until thou hast a blessing. Then resign
The whole unto him; and remember who
Prevailed by wrestling ere the sun did shine.
Pour oil upon thy stones; weep for thy sin;
See thy heart cleansed from all unhallowed leaven.
Then journey on, and have an eye to heaven!

Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.—PROV. xxviii. 13.

HAVE I not only confessed my sins, but have I forsaken the sins I have confessed? Feeling my need of pardon and acceptance, have I come to God, through Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer, praying for mercy, pleading his promises, and asking from him strength and grace, that I may live a new life in Christ Jesus? Is my penitence for sin evidenced by my turning from sin; my newness of life, by my holiness of life?

If thy heart hath been broken for and from sin, thou mayest not only plead God's mercy, but also his justice for the pardoning of thy sin. Show him his hand and seal; he will never deny himself.—T. WATSON.

I confess I have no hope, but that which inspired the dying malefactor at the side of my Lord; and I must be saved in the same way, as freely—as fully, or not at all. Let me be found accepted in the Beloved, and I shall stand complete in him.—COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

When at thy footstool, Lord, I bend,
And plead with thee for mercy there,
Then think thou of the sinner's Friend,
And for his sake receive my prayer!
Oh think not of my shame and guilt,
My thousand stains of deepest dye;
Think of the blood which Jesus spilt,
And let that blood my pardon buy.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.—Ps. xix. 14.

IS it my desire and earnest prayer, not only that my thoughts and deeds, but that my words, also, may be acceptable in God's sight—that my speech may be always with wisdom and grace? Do I bear in mind that by our words we are to be justified, or condemned; and that if any offend not in word, the same is declared to be a perfect man? Am I ever ready to speak for truth; for Christ; for the welfare of my fellow-men?

Let others see Christ in you, moving, doing, thinking, speaking. Your words and actions will both speak of him, if, indeed, he is in you.—RUFUS WADDELL.

Our conversation need not always be of grace; but it should always be with grace.—MATTHEW HENRY.

The constant governance of our speech, according to duty and reason, is a high instance and a special argument of a thoroughly sincere and solid goodness.
—BARROW.

Jesus, crucified for me,
May I closely follow thee!
Ever walking in thy ways,
Leaning on thee all my days,
Like thee ever may I be,
Jesus, crucified for me!

The Lord will not cast off his people.—Ps. xciv. 14.

WHEN temptations surround me, and faith almost fails, do I remember the blessed promise, that God will not forsake his people? Do I bear in mind that though he hates sin, he loves the sinner, and will ever bear up the penitent and struggling disciple in the arms of his love? And do I cast myself entirely on his sympathy and promise and love, and so find grace and strength according to my need?

A soul may fall from the comforts of grace, but not from the habits of grace. A child of God may be cast down, but he can never be cast off.—CHARNOCK.

A child of God may fall very low, but he can never fall below the promises.—FLAVEL.

Be not discouraged, believer, by all the discomforts, and trials and even failures of the way. Keep but the end in view, and hold fast to the promise, and the victory in the end is sure. *

Think of the gain only, count not the losses ;
Think of the crown only, count not the crosses ;
Think of the angels surrounding the throne ;
Think of the triumph, so soon to be won ;
Think how His love all thy way shall attend,
Safely to bring thee to heaven in the end !
Weary not ; murmur not ; faint not, or fail ;
Jesus hath promised ; his word shall prevail !

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.—DEUT. iv. 9.

DO I carefully endeavor to keep out of the way of temptation, remembering that it is only when I am in the way of duty I can expect God's preserving power to keep me from evil? Am I diligent in the use of the means for keeping my soul in the narrow way? And do I prayerfully endeavor so to live as to keep myself unspotted from the world, and give no occasion to others to speak reproachfully of the cause of Christ?

Those who would be faithful in religion, must be very cautious, and walk circumspectly. Considering how many the temptations without, and what corrupt inclinations we have within, we have great need to look about us, and to keep our hearts with all diligence, knowing that out of them are the issues of life.

One of the strongest arguments for the truth of Christianity, is the true Christian; the man filled with the Spirit of Christ. The best proof of Christ's resurrection, is the living disciple and the living Church, walking in a new life, and drawing that life from Him who hath overcome death.—CHRISTLIEB.

Against the heart's presumptuous sins,
I fly to faith and prayer;
But where the tempter's art begins,
Oh, keep and save me there!
Teach me to shun the first dark thought,
The wandering of the will;
Oh, keep the soul thy blood hath bought,
That I may serve thee still!

Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, make thy way straight before my face.—Ps. v. 8

DO I feel my utter insufficiency to choose my own way, and to guide my own steps? And is it my earnest prayer that God would guide me, and make plain to me the way of duty, and give me grace and strength ever to be found in it? Do I find comfort in the thought of his protecting power and his gracious willingness to keep me? And is it my chief desire to know what he would have me to be, and do, and if need be, suffer for him?

Men may judge us by the success of our efforts or plans; but God looks at the plans and efforts themselves, and at the spirit that prompts them.—BROWN.

Life is a journey; we need some one to point out its way. It is a labor; we need some one to strengthen us for its performance. It is a discipline; we need some one to train us for all that lies beyond it. It is a probation of character, and for eternity; we need some one to guard us from its temptations, support us under its trials, to give us the victory over self and sin and the world, and to bring us safely at last to the rest of heaven. And all this we can find only in Christ.

*

O God, thy righteous grace display,
And my protection be;
Teach me to know that only way
That leads to heaven and thee.

—W. WRANGHAM.

Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.—Ps. l. 23.

DO I feel the importance of praise as well as of prayer? And when blessings are bestowed in answer to prayer, do I bring the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for their bestowment? Is it the great aim of my life to glorify God? May I not glorify him by a cheerful and grateful spirit, daily acknowledging his goodness, and praising him for all his mercies both temporal and spiritual?

Cheerfulness with thankfulness of spirit fills the soul full of harmony. It makes and publishes glorifications of God. When the oil of gladness runs over it makes bright emissions of light and holy fires of worship, reaching up to the cloud and making joy round about it.—BISHOP TAYLOR.

Let not thy praises be transient—a fit of music, and then thy harp hung by the wall till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God comes not guest-wise to his saints' house, but to dwell with them. David took this up for a life work: “As long as I live, I will praise thee.”—GURNALL.

Sing of his dying love;
Sing of his rising power;
Sing how he intercedes above,
For us, whose sins he bore.
Sing, till we feel our hearts
Ascending with our tongues;
Sing, till the love of sin departs,
And grace inspires our songs.

—W. HAMMOND.

Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.—JER. xxix. 13.

ABOVE all things, do I desire God's presence and favor? And am I seeking for him in his word, in prayer, in providence, and in all the means of grace? Is it my sincere and earnest desire that God will always dwell with me? Do I avoid whatever may displease him or grieve him from my heart? And even if I do not at once find, do I still persevere in seeking until he bless me?

God will not only pardon, but he will pardon freely, pardon fully, pardon frequently, pardon like a God, the greatest sins, and the greatest sinners if they will but seek him in penitence and faith. Not one that so comes to him, will ever be cast out.

*

Promises are given, not to supersede, but to quicken and encourage prayer; and when deliverance is coming, we must, by prayer, go forth to meet it. In seeking God, we must search for him, and continue seeking and take pains in seeking; and this we must do with our whole heart, in sincerity and truth.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Poor child of sin and woe,
Now listen to thy Father's pleading voice;
No longer needst thou go
Without a friend to bid thy heart rejoice.
How canst thou turn away?
It is thy Father that invites thee near!
Then turn, and weep, and pray,
And heaven shall hail thy penitential tear!

—MORRIS.

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.—ROM. viii. 18.

AS to all the trials and suffering of life, do I bear in mind that they last but for a little while: and that they are all designed by God to work out for me spiritual and eternal good? Do I look away from them to the exceeding and eternal weight of glory laid up for those who, like Christ, are made perfect through suffering? Are my trials sanctified? Are they fitting me for the glory to be revealed to God's children in heaven?

Shall I dictate to the only wise God, my Saviour, what sort of discipline he ought to adopt in training me up for my purchased inheritance of glory?—H. KIRKE WHITE.

Bear thy cross, and stand faithful to God, and then he will give thee a crown of everlasting glory that shall not be taken away. There is no other way which shall prosper than that in which holy men of old walked.—WM. PENN.

And thus by ways not understood,
Out of each dark vicissitude,
God brings us compensating good;
And faith is perfected by fears,
And souls renew their youth with years,
And love looks into heaven through tears.

—CARY.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.—ACTS xvi. 31.

DO I accept with thankful and intelligent belief, the record given in the gospel, concerning Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Redeemer? Have I come to him, and given myself to him as my Saviovr, to be forgiven, taught, ruled and saved by him, in the way that he has appointed? Do I trust my all to him for time and eternity, rejoicing in him as my hope, my guide, my strength, my full and complete salvation? Do I so live, as to have clear evidence of my faith?

The way of salvation is plain. There are only three steps: first, out of self; second, into Christ; third, into heaven.

Faith is nothing else but the soul's venture. It ventures to Christ, in opposition to legal terrors; it ventures on Christ, in opposition to all guiltiness; it ventures for Christ, in opposition to all difficulties and discouragements.—W. BRIDGE.

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terror to my mind.
But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins.

—WATTS.

I will walk in thy truth.—Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

ADOVE all things do I love the truth? Is it my earnest prayer that God will make it plain to me, and aid me to walk in the way it points out as right? Do I seek in all things to be governed by his teachings? Am I anxious to be sincere in religion, and earnest in my desire to know and do the will of God? Do I look to Christ as the great Teacher and perfect Example of truth, and endeavor so to live as faithfully to imitate him?

In the knowledge of God is the only true wisdom; in the service of God, the only true freedom; in the love of God, the only true felicity: and these all are so vast, that though they have their seed-time on earth, room for the harvest can only be found in eternity, in heaven.

It is not the bee touching on flowers that gathers honey, but her abiding on them for a time, and so drawing out the sweet. So it is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on divine truth, that will prove the choicest, wisest, and strongest Christian.—BISHOP HALL.

Truthful Spirit, dwell with me;
Let me ever walk with thee;
Let me know and love thy ways;
Let my life show forth thy praise;
Every truth make plain and clear,
Till thy life in mine appear.

God comforteth those that are cast down.—2 COR. vii. 6.

IF in trouble or sorrow, do I look to God alone for comfort? Do I acknowledge and feel that he best knows what is for my good, and that if he sends trial, it is for my profit, that I may be partaker of his holiness? Do I go to him for comfort as I would to the dearest earthly friend, knowing that he is not only able, but willing to grant it, and to make every sorrow work out for me spiritual and eternal good?

Every bereaved and sorrowing heart, every despondent or struggling soul, every seeker after righteousness can testify, that to believe in Jesus Christ is the sure road to support, and strength, and consolation.—C. ELLIOT.

If God be our Father, and we know and feel it, we shall be content to let the vessel of our life drift where it will; for if he guide the helm, it cannot fail to go upon the right track.

The child leans on its parent's breast,
Leaves there its cares and is at rest;
The bird sits singing by its nest,
 And tells aloud
His trust in God, and so is blest
 'Neath every cloud;
By flowing stream or grassy mead,
 He sings to shame
Men who forget, in fear of need,
 A Father's name.

—ISAAC WILLIAMS.

Be ye followers of God as dear children.—EPH. v. 1.

AM I a follower of God—an humble, but faithful imitator of my divine Master? Do I cherish his Spirit, and seek to be conformed to his example, and to have his image enstamped upon my heart? Do I endeavor to be meek, and gentle, and loving, and holy as he was? Every day do I keep his character and life before me, as they are set forth in his word? And is it my constant prayer and effort, that I may every day be growing in likeness to him?

Christians are like children learning to write. They may never be able to write as perfectly as the engraving; yet if they do the best they can, and daily improve, the master is pleased. So we must ever copy the Lord Jesus. The truest scriptural perfection, is, to be always aiming at perfection.—SPURGEON.

Christ is the pattern, the exemplary cause of our sanctification. Holiness in us, is the copy or transcript of the holiness in him. As the wax hath line for line from the seal, and the child limb for limb, and feature for feature from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ.—PHILIP HENRY.

Quiet, Lord, my froward heart;
 Make me teachable and mild,
Upright, humble, free from art;
 Make me as the weaned child,
From distrust and envy free,
 Pleased with all that pleases thee.

The greatest of these is charity.—1 COR. xiii. 13.

DO I bear in mind that those who most cultivate the grace of charity, or Christian love, are most like Christ in character? Do I remember that love is the fulfilling of the law, and on it hang all the commandments? Do I seek to be loving and kind to all, and so to imitate the example of the Saviour? Do I habitually feel that if I love God, I must love all his creatures, and especially his children?

Love is the first outgoing of the renewed soul to God, "we love him, because he first loved us;" the evidence of saving grace in the soul, "the fruit of the Spirit is love;" the foundation of the Christian character, "we are rooted and grounded in love." It is the path in which all God's children are found, they "walk in love;" the bond of their virtual union, they are "knit together in love;" their protection in the spiritual warfare, they "put on the breastplate of love;" the completeness of their Christian character, they are "made perfect in love;" that by which they become like God and fitted for heaven, for "God is love," and heaven is a world where love reigns perfectly, and for ever. *

Faith, hope, and charity, these three,

Yet is the greatest charity!

Father of lights! these gifts impart

To mine, and every human heart.

Faith, that in prayer can never fail,

Hope, that o'er doubting must prevail;

And charity, whose name above,

Is God's own name, for God is love!

MONTGOMERY.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.—EPH. iv. 1.

IS my daily walk as a Christian consistent with my high and holy calling in Christ Jesus? In all the relations of life do I endeavor to cherish the spirit, and imitate the example of the blessed Saviour? Am I penitent for sin, humble in view of my unworthiness, strong in my faith in Christ, and holy in a life devoted to him? Is the daily aspiration of my heart for a closer walk with God? Am I willing to give up, promptly and cheerfully, everything that interferes with my nearness to him?

Grace is of a stirring nature. It will show itself in holiness and good works. It will walk with you, and talk with you in all places and companies. It will buy with you, and sell with you, and have a hand with you in all your transactions, in public or in private, in the house or by the way.

It is a blessed promise that “the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” This is the terminating link in the golden chain of the everlasting covenant. It begins with grace, it ends with glory. It begins with our entrance on the Christian life here, and no link shall be wanting till the ransomed and glorified spirit shall be presented faultless before ‘the throne with exceeding joy!

Oh, that our thoughts so heavenly were,
Our hearts to Christ so fully given,
That all our toils, and loves, and care,
Might only lead us nearer there,
Where he is set in heaven!

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—MATT. xi. 28.

DO I feel that I am indeed a sinner against God? And am I so burdened with a sense of sin, and so weary of it, that I long for rest, and am willing to seek it from Christ in the way of his appointment? Have I come to him in penitence and faith taking him as my Redeemer, Ruler, Teacher, Guide, Example, casting my burdens on him, finding rest in his love, and expecting, through his promised grace, to be received at last to the rest of heaven?

Christ offers pardon to the guilty; purity to the defiled; peace, joy, hope, heaven to the wretched; or, which includes them all, that strange, unearthly blessing, *rest* to the weary and heavy-laden soul.—CAIRD.

Oh, that word *rest*! How sweet and how full of meaning, as it comes from the lips of the gracious Redeemer! Here is rest from the burden of guilt, from the annoyance of temptation, from the fear of death, from the gnawings of the worm that never dies; rest from all the cares, and sorrows, and trials of this life; rest in the bosom of infinite love; rest eternal in the paradise of God! Who that feels his need will refuse to accept it?—C. WILCOX.

Thine for ever! Oh, how blest
They who find in thee their rest!
Thou, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
Guide us to the realms of day.
Thine for ever may we be,
Here and in eternity!—MAUDE.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.—MATT. vii. 1.

DO I regard the conduct of others with the same charity and mercy that I would have God show to mine? If ever tempted to judge my fellow-men, do I remember that to do it is to dare to assume an office which God claims for himself? Do I avoid discussing the characters and affairs of my neighbors; and never, by word or look, sanction it on the part of others? Rather do I take the part of the absent, and instead of exposing their faults, endeavor to speak, if not a good, at least a kind word for them?

He who blames others the most, is usually the most to be blamed himself. An eye quick to detect the faults of another, is but too commonly blind to its own. A sharp tongue is moved by an unquiet spirit; and an unquiet spirit wanteth not words of complaining and evil. Resentment, aversion, jealousy, indifference, all move us to unjust judgment of others.

While I am ready to adopt for myself any well-grounded opinion of others, my inmost heart revolts against receiving the judgments of others respecting persons; and I have never done so without bitterly repenting it.—NIEBUHR.

Judge not. The workings of his brain,
And of his heart, thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldest only faint and yield.

Prepare to meet thy God.—AMOS iv. 12.

DO I realize that I must soon enter the unseen state, and there meet God in judgment? And have I made the preparation that must be made before I can meet him in peace? By sincere repentance for sin, and a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, am I prepared for the final day? And were my soul this day required, should I meet death, not as a dreaded enemy, but rather as my Father's messenger and a friend?

There are not many who finish their lives before they die. Very few go willingly; most are forced, and not a few dragged to the grave. Instead of leaving the world, they are hunted out of it.—GOTTHOLD.

Death, to the good man, is but passing through a dark entry, out of one little dusky room in his Father's house into another that is fair, large, lightsome, glorious, and divinely blessed. In the language of heaven, and to the heir of heaven, death means everlasting life.—CLARKE.

Thou canst make death's awful summons,
Angel whispers to mine ear;
Chilling blood and breaking heartstrings,
Thrills of joy if thou art near!
Waiting, working, praying, hoping,
While the shadows creep apace,
Clinging to thee—resting *on* thee,
Death is but thy crowning grace!

—BRUNOT.

Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.—
ZECH. ix. 12.

DO I feel that I am indeed a sinner against God? And does the sense of my sinfulness lead me to turn to Christ, the only stronghold of refuge for the guilty? Have I, by faith, turned to him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour? Do I bear in mind that he is almighty, and will not suffer Satan to be triumphant? And as on earth he prayed for his tempted followers and prevailed, so do I know that, now, in heaven he is praying for me, and that if I trust him, I am for ever safe?

There is no condition so low, that we may not have hope, and none so high as to be above salutary fear.
—M. HENRY.

God hath linked salvation to faith, by more than links of steel, even by his unchangeable decree.—C. HODGE.

Heaven's gates are wide enough to admit every sinner in the universe who is penitent, but too narrow to admit a single sin.—HOWELS.

Lo! the incarnate God, ascended,
Pleads the merit of his blood;
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus—none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.

—J. HART.

Go, work to-day in my vineyard.—MATT. xxi. 28.

HAVE I entered the vineyard of the Lord? And am I a faithful laborer in it? In all sincerity can I say that I do what I can—that I endeavor to fill my sphere of duty? What are my motives in labor? Am I working for the glory of God, or for my personal advancement, and to win the praise of men? Do I depend on anything that I can do as giving me a title to God's favor? Or is my diligence in labor the fruit of my love to him?

Idleness is the mother of many sinful children. They that do nothing are in the ready way to do worse than nothing.—The devil, says the proverb, tempts all men; but the idle man tempts the devil to tempt him. *

Work for God, is treasure laid up in heaven.

If there be happiness on earth, it is in laboring in the cause of Christ. The vineyard is to be cultivated; the command is that we enter it and work; and our reward will be proportionate to our diligence.

Teach me to live! No idler let me be,
But in thy service heart and hand employ;
Ever to do thy bidding cheerfully,
Be this my highest and my holiest joy.
A faithful steward may I here be found,
And so at last with endless glory crowned!

I delight to do thy will, O my God.—Ps. xl. 8.

IS it my chief desire and prayer, that I may do the will of God in all things? Do I seek to conform my will to his, as it is made known to me in his word, in his providence, and by his Spirit? Is it my daily and sincere prayer, that I may habitually feel that God knows all things, and has my well-being at heart, and that his will must be best? With the blessed Saviour, can I at all times say, “Not my will, but thine be done!”

God's people are travelers. Sometimes they are in dark lanes and deep valleys, and sometimes on the hills of joy, where all is light and peace. Let them but always follow, and he will always guide.—TOP-LADY.

He who can say, I will whatever God wills, is always safe, and must be happy.—J. HAWES.

Childlike obedience moves toward every command of God, as the needle points where the loadstone draws. If God calls to duties that are crosses to flesh and blood, if we are indeed his children we hear and obey our Father's voice.—T. WATSON.

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be:
Lead me by thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Glorify ye the Lord in the fires.—ISA. xxiv. 15.

WHEN the fires of affliction are kindled about me, do I glorify God in the flames? Does my patience under tribulation, beam forth to the glory of God? Do I glorify him by a spirit of thankfulness for the comforts he has left me, and by submission as to those he has seen fit to take away? If in the furnace, like the three of old, is the Son of God with me in the flames?

Afflictions are blessings to us when we can bless God for afflictions. God had one Son without sin, but he never had any without sorrow.—DYER.

If thou bear the cross cheerfully, it will bear thee, and lead thee to the world where there is an end of suffering for ever.—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

“Why should I murmur?” said Henry Martyn in his last sickness: “weakness, peril and pain are but ministering angels to conduct me to glory.”

Hold fast Christ, and take his cross cheerfully; for though he and his cross are not separable in this life, they part at the door in heaven.—RUTHERFORD.

Would not thy sorest tribulations prove
Their own best recompense, if, through the years
Of never-ending bliss, one voice were heard
To say that these, thy sorrows sanctified,
Had proved the means of leading thee to heaven!

—MACDUFF.

*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps
slip not.—Ps. xvii. 5.*

THOUGH, by divine grace, I have been rescued from the paths of the destroyer, yet do I pray for sustaining grace, that I may be kept in the way of godliness that leads to heaven? While I labor to enter into God's rest, do I pray that he will keep me, and aid me in reliance on his strength, to be faithful to the end?

The body of our prayer is the sum of our duty; and as we must ask of God whatsoever we need, we must labor for all that we ask.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

When I forget to crave help from God the chariot wheels of duty drive heavily.—PHILIP HENRY.

Though in God's paths, we must pray to be kept in them; for we stand no longer than he may hold us, and go no further than he may carry, and uphold, and strengthen us. Do all that we can to stand, and then pray to be kept from falling, and by the grace of God we are safe!

*

Lord! be mine the prize to win;
Guide me through this world of sin;
Keep me by thy saving grace;
Give me at thy side a place;
Sun and shield alike thou art,
Guide and guard my erring heart;
Grace and glory flow from thee,
Shed, oh, shed them, Lord on me!

—H. F. LYTE.

My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.—2 COR. xii. 9.

DO I feel, as I ought, that I am nothing in myself? And feeling this, do I look to the all-sufficient Saviour for help in the hour of weakness, and for the strength that I need for every conflict, and for the discharge of every duty? Every day do I seek for divine strength, endeavoring humbly to rely on its promised aid to all who ask it, that I may be faithful even until death?

Every promise is a staff, able, if we have faith to lean upon it, to bear our whole weight, whether of sin or duty, of care or trouble.—BRIDGES.

Often the Christian, while gathering a few flowers from the world, suffers his God to be at a distance from him. But the moment he perceives he is alone, he runs to reach his Father and best protector.—ROWLAND HILL.

Humility is the first lesson we learn from reflection; and self-distrust the first proof we give of having obtained a view of ourselves, or of God.—ZIMMERMAN.

I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied;
And a mind to blend with outward life
While keeping near thy side;
Content to fill the lowest place,
If thou be glorified.—A. L. WARING.

All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.—ISA. lxiv. 6.

DO I feel that my best actions are so imperfect, and come so far short of the divine standard of duty, that I cannot count them as righteous? Do I regard all that God's grace enables me to do, as only duty, and duty at best but imperfectly performed? And do I look only to the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, to cover my imperfections and weaknesses and sins, that so I may stand accepted as righteous for Jesus' sake?

Morality without religion, is only a kind of dead reckoning, an endeavor to find our place on a cloudy sea by measuring the distance we have run, but without any observation of the heavenly bodies.—
LONGFELLOW.

There is none truly purged by the blood of Christ, that doth not endeavor after purity of heart and life. But yet it is the blood of Christ, by which they are fair, so that there is no spot in them.—LEIGHTON.

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill the law's demands ;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone ;
Thou must save, and thou alone.
Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling !

—TOPLADY.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness.
—Ps. cxvii. 15.

WHEN I think of the infinite power and glory of God, should not his goodness to sinful men fill me with wonder and adoring love? Does not every earthly blessing he bestows declare his goodness? And is not that wondrous goodness still more manifest in sending his Son to die for us when we were sinners? By sincere penitence for sin, and a life of holy obedience, should I not seek to show my gratitude for such wonderful goodness? —

We write our mercies in the dust; but our afflictions we engrave in marble. Our memories serve us but too well to remember the latter; but we are strangely forgetful of the former.—BISHOP HALL.

If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might feel for them with the finger in vain. But let a magnet sweep through it, and how would that draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction. The unthankful heart, like my finger in that sand, discovers no mercies. But let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings:—only the iron in God's sand, is gold.—O. W. HOLMES. —

All nature round us hath an earnest voice,
And ever in God's blessing doth rejoice;
While every lesson heard,
Echoes the written word,
And speaks on every side, beneath, above,
Loudly proclaiming, God indeed is love!

We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.—ACTS xiv. 22.

DO I bear in mind that if I would wear the crown I must bear the cross? And does this thought, instead of enervating and depressing, rather rouse and nerve me for the Christian conflict? Does the fact that suffering is the badge of sonship, reconcile me to trials that otherwise it would be impossible to bear? Do I remember that though God's children may long walk in the vale of trial, they shall soon ascend from it to the unclouded glories of heaven?

Affliction is the divine school of virtue; it corrects levity, interrupts the confidence of sinning, and softens and purifies the heart.—ATTERBURY.

We are not to expect the joys of heaven while here on earth. Let us be content that there is a highway to its blessedness for us to walk in, and a Leader to conduct us in that way.—CECIL.

Griefs may trouble and distress thee,
'Twill but drive thee to his breast;
Life with trials hard may press thee,
Heaven will bring but sweeter rest.
Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven's eternal day before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.

—H. F. LYTE.

She hath done what she could.—MARK xiv. 8.

DO I so order my life that this commendation of the Saviour applies to me? Is it my daily and earnest desire to do what I can to honor God, and bless my fellow-men? Do I feel that duty is to fulfill the claims of the day? And am I anxious to please God by fidelity in little things—by the right performance of the daily and hourly duties that meet me at every step in the pathway of life, remembering that he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much? —

We are not answerable for our stations in life, but for our conduct in them. We can serve God in adversity, as well as prosperity; in private, as well as public; in little things, as well as great. If we do whatever God in his word and providence appoints, we shall have the testimony that we please him.—
W. JAY.

Your circumstances and position in life may be such as to forbid any great and splendid service for God. But the quiet and humble walk; fidelity, diligence, patience, submission; an unselfish and cheerful spirit; the kind and thoughtful and considerate word and deed, these he values as much as the most laborious and imposing efforts. — *

We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbor and our work farewell;
The trivial round, the common task,
May furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.—KEBLE.

And to every man his work.—MARK xiii. 34.

IF I would ever do anything for God, for my own soul, for my fellow-men, why not be doing it now? And if I have never begun to do it, why not begin to-day? Is not the night coming when no man can work? Is there not work enough to be done? And does not the command of a loving Father, speaking with both authority and affection, urge me to be doing it? At longest, is not the time for working short? When the Master comes, shall I be found faithfully toiling for him?

Be at work. Do what you can. Weep with them that weep, if you cannot relieve them. If you cannot give gold, give personal service. Teach children, if you cannot instruct men. Be a support to the household, if not able to be a pillar of state. Be a lamp in the chamber, if you cannot be a star in the sky. Glad-den the circle of home, if you cannot illumine a city. Talk to the few, if you cannot preach to the many. If you cannot save a world, try to lead at least some one soul to Christ.—S. COLEY.

Work, for your mission is grand and great ;
Work, from the earliest dawn till late ;
Work till the world from its sin is weaned ;
Work till the harvest is fully gleaned ;
Work till the Master shall come again ;
Work, and think never of toil or pain.
Rest will be sweet when the day is done ;
Glory is sure when the battle is won !

My God shall supply all your need.—PHIL. iv. 19.

DO I seek, or have I been seeking from the world, a supply for the wants and cravings of my immortal soul? And having found that it cannot satisfy, have I learned to look to the only One who can supply all my needs, both temporal and spiritual? Do I habitually go to God for all I esteem as good, and rely on him to bestow it? And if in any measure I am able to be, or do good, do I give all the honor to him alone?

He that follows the Lord fully, will find that goodness and mercy follow him continually. For daily wants he will find daily grace. If God had ever failed one who trusted in him, we might doubt. But he never has, and therefore we may well be confident. *

If there had not been such a thing as goodness, I should long ago have given up all hope of earthly good. If not such a thing as grace, I should long ago have given up the hope of heaven. But goodness, grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, have been and for ever must be the rock on which we perishing souls must rest.—RUTHERFORD.

Look to Jesus when distrest,
See what he the Holy bore;
Is thy heart with conflict prest?
Is thy spirit harassed sore?
See his sweat of blood, his conflict,
Watch his agony increase,
Harken to his groans ascending,
Hear his prayer, and feel his peace.

—FRAUGEN.

Let thy garments be always white.—Eccl. ix. 8.

DO I pass through the world fulfilling the part which God has appointed as mine, not going out of it to avoid temptations, but endeavoring to overcome them in Christ's strength? Do I so live that all can see that though *in* the world I am not *of* it, but *above* it? Have I washed my soul white in the blood of the Lamb? By prayer and watchfulness, and in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, do I keep myself unspotted from the world?

The religion of the gospel calls us both out of the world, and into the world; out of it, as to its principles and maxims and temper; into it, as a field of labor and a sphere of usefulness, where we are to be diligent in business, to relieve the distressed, to teach the ignorant, to reclaim the vicious, and to do good to all as Christ did.—W. JAY.

Alas! how defiled in thy most holy sight, are my garments and walk! No doubt from day to day I brush away the dust, but ah! how little good it does! Forgive me, O my Father, and cleanse me, granting me so to walk that I may at last enter, pure and unsullied, thy holy city!—GOTTHOLD.

Teach me to live Thy purpose to fulfill;
Bright for thy glory let my taper shine:
Each day renew, remould this stubborn will;
Closer round thee my heart's affections twine;
Keep me unspotted while a pilgrim here;
Then bring me, sinless, to the heavenly sphere!

The Lord heareth the prayer of the righteous.—
PROV. xv. 29.

AM I one of those whose prayers God has promised to hear? Do I pray in faith, expecting an answer to my prayer, in the spirit of submission, only asking for what God sees best to grant, remembering that God has said, "For all this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them"? Are all my prayers offered in the name of Christ, the great Mediator and Intercessor? And do I know that for his sake, God will bestow whatever is for my highest good and his own glory?

He that is much in prayer shall grow rich in grace. He shall thrive and increase most, that is busiest in this, which is our very traffic with heaven, and brings the most precious commodities thence.—LEIGHTON.

We are often as sad after prayer as before, because our prayers are not the prayers of expecting faith. But prayer, if offered with real belief and hope, will enable us always to roll our cares from ourselves upon the Lord.—M. HENRY.

If pains afflict, or wrongs oppress,
If cares distract, or fears dismay,
If guilt deject, if sin distress,
The remedy's before thee—pray.
'Tis prayer supports the soul that's weak,
Though thought be broken, language lame;
Pray if thou canst, or canst not, speak,
But pray with faith in Jesus' name.—J. HART.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?—ACTS ix. 6.

IS this the great question—the sincere question—the habitual question of my life? Is the will of God my pleasure, and the work of God my choice and delight? Do I seek to do good to all, and at all times, as the providence of God may open the way for it? Is it my earnest prayer and chief desire that I may be diligent and faithful in following the example of him whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God?

My heaven is to please God and glorify him; to give all to him; to be diligent in his work, and wholly devoted to his glory. That is the heaven that I long for; that is my religion, and that is my happiness.—ADEN.

A man sincerely obedient will not pick and choose what commands to obey, and what to reject. He will lay such a charge upon his whole man as the mother of Christ did on the servants at the feast. “ Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” Eyes, ears, hands, heart, body, soul, do you all seriously and lovingly observe and diligently do whatever Christ says unto you?—T. BROOKS.

At evening to myself I say,
Where hast thou been and gleaned to-day,
Thy labors how bestowed?
What hast thou rightly said or done?
What grace attained, what knowledge won,
In following after God?—C. WESLEY.

Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.—2 COR. vi. 2.

DO I realize that time is both short and uncertain? And am I making a diligent use of the present, leaving nothing undone that I ought to do; trusting nothing to the uncertainties of the future, which to me may never come? Do I realize that my eternal welfare depends on the use I am making of the present? And am I diligent and earnest in working out my salvation, while God is waiting to work with me, both to will and to do, that I may be saved?

There are but three steps to salvation: out of self; into Christ; into heaven. Out of self by repentance; into Christ, by faith; into heaven, by grace.

The way to heaven is narrow and difficult. Sin is to be forsaken, the world overcome, Satan resisted, self denied, duties diligently performed. Few go in this way. But the way to hell is open, broad, and thronged. To walk in it is easy; but the end is death. The narrow way demands effort, but it leads to life everlasting.

*

Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead:
Thus on till wisdom is pushed out of life!
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals till all are fled,
And to the merits of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene!

—YOUNG.

In God have I put my trust.—Ps. lvi. 4.

IS my faith so clear and settled and steadfast, that I can and do adopt this sublime language of the psalmist as my own? Have I such full and implicit confidence in Christ's power and willingness and promises, that I commit my soul to him to save it, my life to protect and guide and direct it, and my entire being to reign in and over it, and to use it with all its powers and capacities, to his honor and glory? Does this confidence dispel every doubt and fear, and enable me, whether living or dying, to say, "I know whom I have believed"?

Our hope is not hung on such an untwisted thread as "I imagine so," or "It is likely;" but the strong cable of our fastened anchor is the promise and oath of him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand and Christ's own strength to the strong hold of God's unchanging nature and truthfulness.—RUTHERFORD.

Thou art the true, incarnate Lord,
Who did vouchsafe for man to die!—
Thy love is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!
I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given—nor peace alone,
But faith and hope and ecstasy!

—WORDSWORTH.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—PHIL. ii. 5.

DO I earnestly and prayerfully endeavor to cherish, habitually, the spirit of Christ? Do I seek to learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart? Like him, do I strive to be gentle and kind to all; by word and deed to do them good; to sympathize with them in sorrow, and aid them to improve prosperity; and in all, to point them to heaven? Like him am I submissive and obedient to the will of the Father? Am I willing even to bear the cross, if I may but honor him?

Life affords but few opportunities of doing great things for others. But there is scarcely an hour of the day which does not afford opportunities of performing some little kindness to others, in the spirit and for the sake of Christ.—BOWES.

Wherever a care is to be lightened; wherever a kind word or look may give relief; wherever forbearance may be manifested, or forgiveness shown, or sympathy expressed, or good of any kind be done, there we may show forth the spirit of the Saviour, and so do that which is well pleasing to him.—TAYLOR.

More holiness give me; more strivings within;
More patience in suffering; more sorrow for sin;
More faith in the Saviour; more sense of his care;
More joy in his service; more purpose in prayer;
More grace to be humble; more strength to o'ercome;
More freedom from earth stains; more longings for
home.
More fit for the kingdom; more useful I'd be;
More thankful; more holy; more, Saviour, like thee!

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.—
ROM. x. 10.

HAS my confession of Christ a deeper origin than that of the lips? Does my faith go further than the understanding? Does it take in the real, earnest, sincere, and strong consent of the will, and the warm affections of the soul? Does my heart yield unfeigned assent to the gospel revelation concerning Christ as the only Saviour? And do I rest all my hopes for time and eternity on him, taking his righteousness as mine, and having my life in him?

Justifying faith is such a belief of the gospel through the power of God's Spirit, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, to obey Christ, to be united to Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls to Christ, in the humble but strong confidence of his perfect ability and willingness to save us. It is not the product of mere human reason, though entirely consistent with it. It has its deep foundation in the heart.

A man of subtle reasoning asked
A peasant if he knew
What is the clearest evidence
That proves the gospel true.
The terms of disputative art
Had never reached his ear;
He laid his hand upon his heart,
And simply answered, "*Here!*"

Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.—MATT. xxiv. 44.

AM I a waiting, as well as a working servant, ready for the coming of my Lord, no matter whether the time be distant or near at hand? Am I so clothed with his righteousness as to be fit to be received by him; and so diligent in his work, that he will own me as a good and faithful servant? Is the prospect of death, and of meeting Christ, one of apprehension, or of calm and trustful anticipation to me? —

O Lord, let no business, no pleasures, no plans ever divert my thoughts from the world to come; but may I cheerfully part with all when thou mayest require it.
—BISHOP WILSON.

A wise man said to his disciples: "Turn to God one day before your death." "But," said they, "how can a man know the day of his death?" "Therefore," said he, "you should turn to God to-day; for perhaps you may die to-morrow. Thus every day will be employed in returning, and you will be always ready." —

Traveler, see thy gracious day,
Swiftly drawing to its end;
Mend thy pace, pursue thy way,
E'er the shades of night descend.
Fear to lose a moment's space,
Watchful, earnest, hasten on;
And when death concludes thy race,
Dying, shout, "The work is done!"
Ready, faithful, ever be,
Till the Saviour call for thee!

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—PHIL. iv. 13.

DO I realize, as I ought, that the ever-present sustaining strength of Christ is promised to all who seek it? And feeling my constant need, do I go to him for the help he is always so ready to impart? Do I daily ask what I can do for him to-day, watching for opportunities that I may honor him by doing the work that in his providence he may give me to do?

Keep Christ in your heart, and he will give you strength for every duty, courage for every conflict, safety in every temptation, comfort in every sorrow, and life eternal in the hour of death. Though weak in yourself, in God's strength you may thresh down the mountains. Like the apostle, you can do all things through Christ strengthening you. *

Creatures may not be able, or if able, may not be willing; but Christ is both able and willing. In temporals, he will help me by his providence; in spirituels, from his own fullness; in health, that I may not slide; in sickness, that I may not murmur; in plenty, that I may not be proud; in poverty, that I may not complain; in all times of sickness, pain, sorrow, temptation, distress, that I may honor him, and be faithful to the end.—J. SMITH.

Thy grace sustains my spirit now,
Though still a pilgrim here below;
That grace suffices, comforts, guides,
Upholds, defends, preserves, provides,
Gives foretaste here of promised bliss,
And leads where Christ for ever is!

Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee.—JOHN xxi. 17.

CAN I appeal to my Saviour, who knows all things, as to the sincerity of my love to him ? Is it a comfort to know that my witness is with him, and that my record is in the Lamb's book of life ? And does the sense of his wondrous love fill me with thankfulness, and constrain me to live for him ? Has he always the first place in my heart, and the entire consecration of my life ?

Love is the greatest thing that God can give us ; for he himself is love. It is the greatest thing we can give to God ; for it gives ourselves, and all that is ours. They are the truest disciples of Christ, not who know most, but who love most.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

O Lord, I am thine. Thou hast bought me with thy blood ; won me by thy grace ; called me by thy word ; subdued me by thy Spirit ; adopted me as thy child ; and so sealed me as an heir of heaven. I am thine entirely and for ever. My soul is thine, to adore thee ; my heart thine, to love thee ; my body thine, to serve thee ; my tongue thine, to praise thee ; my entire being thine, to glorify and enjoy thee for ever ! *

In word, in deed, in thought,
I do not, cannot love thee as I ought.
Thy love must give the power. That love alone
Can kindle here below
Such love within me as the seraphs know,
Who burn and worship ever round thy throne

A Christian.—1 PET. iv. 16.

WITH a clear knowledge of all that is implied in the word, can I call myself a Christian? Do I receive all that Christ teaches, and endeavor, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to do all that Christ commands? Am I Christlike in my views of truth; in my temper; in my endeavors, like him, to do good? Does my religion stand firm alike in joy or sorrow, in the sunshine and the storm? Does it exert a hallowed influence on others? Does the world see, and say, that I am a faithful follower of Christ? —

If you are in faith a believer, in knowledge a disciple, in character a saint, in influence a light, in conflict a soldier, in communion a friend, in progress a pilgrim, and in relationship to God a child, then you may be assured that you are a Christian, an heir of God, and joint-heir with his Son. *

A Christian is one who is decided in his devotedness to God; painstaking in his search for truth; strong in benevolent purpose and holy endeavors; wielding a blessed influence; often failing, but never ceasing in right effort; one who lives for Christ, and of whom, in death, it can be said, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

—KINSTON.

Thee to serve, and thee to know,

Constitute my bliss below;

Thee to see, and thee to love,

Constitute my bliss above.

Lord, it is not life to live,

If thy presence thou deny;

— And if thou that presence give,

'Tis no longer death to die!

I have set the Lord always before me.—Ps. xvi. 8.

DO I set God before me in all my thoughts, plans, words and deeds? Do I look to him as my chief good and highest end; my Owner, Ruler, Director and Judge; my gracious Redeemer, my constant Benefactor, my sure Guide, my everlasting Friend? And in all this, have I the comforting assurance that I shall not be moved from the path of duty, or lose the comforts of his presence? Is love to him the great source of my confidence?

To obey God in some things of religion and not in others, shows an unsound heart. Childlike obedience moves toward every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws.—WATSON.

It ought to be the great care of every one of us, to follow the Lord fully. We must follow him universally, without dividing; uprightly, without dissembling; cheerfully, without disputing; constantly, without declining; and this is following him fully.—M. HENRY.

With heart, and eyes, and lifted hands,
For thee I long, to thee I look;
As travelers in thirsty lands,
Pant for the cooling water-brook.
For life itself, without thy love,
No taste of pleasure could afford;
'Twould but a tiresome burden prove,
If I were banished from my Lord.

—WATTS.

God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.—1 PET. v. 5.

DO I remember not only the infinite distance between God and myself, but my weakness, my ignorance, my sinfulness, and does the thought of all this keep me humble before the High and Holy One? And if pride ever rises within, do I think of him who, though he was God, yet took on himself the form of a servant, and endured the contradiction of sinners, and died that we might live? and does this thought lay every feeling of self-exaltation in the dust?

If we are truly humble, we shall readily believe all God says; thankfully receive all he gives: patiently endure all he inflicts; meekly resign all he may take; promptly do all he commands, and unhesitatingly believe all that he promises. Humility will make us sincere toward God, and courteous toward man.—
JAMES SMITH.

The showers of grace slide off from the lofty mountains, but rest on the valleys, and make them fruitful. He giveth grace to the lowly. He loves to bestow it where there is most room to receive it, and most return of praises for it. Such is the humble heart; and truly as much humility gains much grace, so it grows by it.—LEIGHTON.

The saint that wears heaven's highest crown,
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
The most when high his soul ascends.
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility.—MONTGOMERY.

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.—EPH. iv. 23.

DO I find for myself, and give to others, the evidence, that I am a new creature in Christ Jesus? Are the principles, habits, and dispositions of my soul changed? Do I shrink from allowing the sinful desires, and yielding to the sinful propensities of former days? Are the things of God precious to me? Is the society of his people a pleasure? Is obedience to his will my great aim? Does my life show the change of my heart?

Heart-work must be God's work. Only the great Heart-maker, can be the great Heart-breaker. If I love him, my heart will be filled with his Spirit, and obedient to his commands.—BAXTER.

I heartily desire that ye would mind your country, and consider to what direction your soul setteth its face; for all come not home at night who suppose they have set their face heavenward through the day.
—RUTHERFORD.

Oh for a heart to praise my God;
A heart from sin set free;
And cleansed in thine atoning blood,
So freely shed for me.
A heart in every thought renewed,
And filled with love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine!—C. WESLEY.

As thy days, so shall thy strength be.—DEUT. xxxiii. 25.

HAS God given me work to do, or burdens to bear, which are beyond my own strength? Then do I take to myself the full benefit and comfort of the promise, that he will give me strength according to my need? Do I bear in mind that this strength will be given just when I need it, and not before; living strength for the living day, and dying strength for the dying day? And do I remember that God is able to fulfill his promise, and that he always will, if by faith I take him at his word?

Oh! how sweet for us to learn to make our own burdens light, by framing our hearts to the burden; making God's will our law, and God's promise our support.—RUTHERFORD.

Every promise of God rests on four pillars: his holiness and justice, which will not suffer him to deceive; his grace and goodness, which will not suffer him to forget; his truth, which will not suffer him to change, and his power, which makes him able to accomplish.—SALTER.

O fellow-Christian, whosoe'er thou art
This is for thee and me:
This wine of trust that maketh glad the heart,
In its adversity.—
Drink, therefore, and so bear a braver part;
For as thy day, so sure, thy strength shall be.

I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.—Hos. ii. 14.

DO I realize that when God has mercy in store for his children, he often brings them to the wilderness of trial, that there, in quiet and retirement, they may commune with him? Does it encourage me to know, that when the enforced quiet has done its appointed work, then he will speak comfort to the soul, and give that peace and joy which flow only from nearness of communion with himself?

Whilst thou art passing on through the wilderness, from the gate of hell where thou wast, to the gate of heaven where thou art going, God hath strewed thy path with promises, as with flowers from his own paradise.—**BUNYAN.**

Give me the comforts of God, and I can well bear the taunts of men. Let me lay my head on the bosom of Jesus, and I fear not the distraction of care and trouble. If my God will but give me the light of his smile, and the blessing of his benediction, it is enough.

—**SPURGEON.**

Till death the weary spirit free,
My God hath said, "'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith, and not by sight
Take it on trust a little while;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right,
In the full sunlight of his smile.—**KEBLE.**

Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.—Ps. xli. 1.

DO I constantly bear in mind that, as to all I possess, I am but God's steward? And as he has commanded, do I thoughtfully and habitually consider the poor? Do I aid them only when their necessities are forced upon my notice; or do I seek out the knowledge of their wants through personal and self-sacrificing efforts? Is my aid given in a kind and sympathizing spirit? And do I seek to do good alike to the body and the soul?

Proportion thy charity to the strength of thine estate, lest God proportion thine estate to the weakness of thy charity. Let the lips of the poor be the trumpet of thy gift, lest, in seeking applause, thou lose thy reward. Nothing is more pleasing to God than an open hand and a close mouth.—**QUARLES.**

Take care of the poor, and the Lord will take care of you. Liberality to them is the surest and safest way of thriving. Such as practice it may be sure of relief from God in their own time of need.—**MATTHEW HENRY.**

Give! as the morning that flows out of heaven;
Give! as the waves when their channel is riven;
Give! as the free air and sunshine are given;

Lavishly, thoughtfully, cheerfully give:
Not the waste drops of thy cup overflowing;
Not the faint sparks of thy hearth ever glowing;
Not a pale bud from thy full roses blowing—

But give, as He gives thee, who gave thee to live!

Use this world as not abusing it.--1 COR. vii. 31.

DO I bear in mind that if I fail to use the world, as God commands, to his honor and glory, then I abuse it; and for this he will soon call me into judgment? Is it not abusing the world, making a wrong use of it, if I allow it to be the master instead of the servant—if I give it the place in my heart that should be kept sacred for God alone? Do I not abuse the world, if I fix my affections on it, or if I live in it as if there were no world beyond?

The world is good in its place. To possess it, may not be injurious; to be possessed by it, is destructive alike to character, to happiness, and to the soul. *

As you care for your soul, beware of the world! It has slain its thousands and tens of thousands. Achan, Haman, Ananias, Sapphira, Demas and Judas, all were ruined by it. Beware lest it ruin you! What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? *

True rest consists not in the oft revving
Of worldly dross;
Earth's miry purchase is not worth the buying;
Her gain is loss;
Her rest but giddy toil, if not relying
Upon the cross.
Her worldlings droil for trouble! That fond heart,
Which is possest
Of earth without a cross, hath earth without a rest!

—QUARLES.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.—Ps. xxiii. 4.

IN all the trials of life, do I find support and comfort in leaning on the Lord? And looking forward to the valley of the shadow of death, do I trust myself fully to his care, who has promised to be with me then? In every time of need do I lean on the staff which never pierces the hand it supports, and never fails those that rest upon it? Thus is my soul continually restored and upheld, and am I led in paths of righteousness for Christ's sake?

There is no Christian who does not, at some time, have a Gethsemane; but every praying Christian will find that there is no Gethsemane without its angel to strengthen him, as Christ was strengthened in the hour of his need.—T. BINNEY.

The discipline of our heavenly Father often cuts below the graft of self-love and earthly-mindedness, that he may remove all that hinders us bearing rich fruit for him; and though sharp is the discipline, we have reason to be thankful for it in the end.

And if his hand, in mercy, bent
The reeds on which I fondly leant,
And plucked my life flowers, 'twas to show,
I must not place my love below;
While with each cross a hope was given,
Which stronger, brighter, beamed for heaven;
And his own staff I found my stay,
And comfort in my pilgrim way.

*In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee,
and will look up.—Ps. v. 3.*

ARE my first waking thoughts given to God? Do I feel the need each morning of prayer, that I may be prepared for the many dangers and trials and temptations and duties of the day? Do I pray for wisdom, for guidance, for the constant presence and influence of God's Spirit; for thankfulness, if my prayers are answered; for submission, if they are denied; for patience in waiting, if they are deferred? Do I look up, and look out, for an answer from on high?

Christ often heareth, when he doth not at once answer. His not answering, is an answer; for it says, Pray on, go on, cry on, for the Lord holdeth the door fast bolted, not to keep you out, but that you may knock, and it shall be opened.—RUTHERFORD.

When the dawn begins to break, and the first ray of sunshine appears, let the day have a blessed baptism by giving your first waking thoughts to God. Thank him that you have been kept through the night. Commit yourself to him for the day. Ask him to be with you through it all. The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the entire day.

When thine eyes first unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like. Our bodies but forerun
The spirit's duty. True hearts spread and heave
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun.
Give him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep
His company all day, and in him safely sleep.

—VAUGHAN.

At evening time it shall be light.—ZECH. xiv. 7.

DOES the blessed assurance that trouble shall have an end, give me comfort? When I am impatient under it, is it not better to think of Christ's sufferings, and his perfect submission under them all, than to dwell on my own? Has not God promised that all things shall work together for good to his children? And is not the discipline of sorrow intended to bring me so near to the Saviour, that the light of his countenance shall shine brightly upon me? —

“Why should I murmur?” said Henry Martyn, in his last sickness, “weakness, peril and pain are but ministering angels who are conducting me to glory.” The best have hours of trial and darkness, but their tears like the rain-drops when shot through by sunbeams, do but throw the bow of promise on the clouds, and declare that the storm is passing away, and that God’s mercy shall never cease. *

The cloud which appeared to Ezekiel, though it carried winds and storms, was environed with a golden circle, to teach that the storms of affliction which happen to God’s children, are encompassed with brightness and smiling joy in the end.—CAUSSIN.

Break through the brambles and thorns that beset thee;
Dread not the gloom and the blackness of night;
Lean on the Hand that will safely conduct thee;
Trust to his eyes to whom darkness is light.
Clouds are not substance; then fear not their darkness.
When their gloom gathers, the light from above
Gleams out in brightness, in safety to guide thee,
While resting in hope on God’s infinite love.

Unite my heart to fear thy name.—Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

AM I sincere, upright, earnest in religion? Are all my powers united in seeking to know, and endeavoring to do, God's will? Or are my affections divided and prone to wander, so that too often I sit loose to the things of eternity, and close to the things of time and sense? Do I feel the need of constant grace to unite my heart to the Saviour, so that I may love him with all my soul, and serve him with all my powers, feeling that all are but too little to praise and honor him?

My God, how often have I, in conversing with thee, been like one asleep and unconscious of what he is saying! Mercifully forgive me for this, and associate henceforth thy Spirit with my spirit, that my prayer may be as devout and earnest as thy greatness and my necessities require.—GOTTHOLD.

The faithful, devoted Christian is all-heartedness. While others do things coldly and without interest, he puts his whole soul into his labor, and does it with hearty goodwill and with a vigorous hearty healthy zeal, because he loves to do it.—MERRY.

O Lord, thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail inconstant heart.
Henceforth my chief desire shall be
To dedicate myself to thee—
To thee, my God, to thee!

Trust in him at all times.—Ps. lxii. 8.

IS my trust in God at all times firm and unshaken—as much so in times of darkness and trouble as in times of light and peace? If not, why? Do I look to self, rather than to him? Contrasting present darkness with past sunshine, am I wondering why God permits the former, instead of feeling thankful for what he still gives me of the latter, and like a loving child leaving all with him, content to trust where I cannot see?

Put your confidence in God. Believe every thing that he says in his word. Whether you understand it or not, have faith in him that he means your good.
—CECIL.

To trust God when we have securities in our own iron chest, is easy, and not thankworthy. But to depend on him for what we cannot see, as it is more hard for us to do, so it is more acceptable to God when done, for in that we make confession of his deity.—FELTHAM.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning Providence,
He hides a smiling face.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain,
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

—COWPER.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.—Ps. li. 9.

HAVE I, in sincere penitence, forsaken the sins for which I ask God's forgiveness? Is the remembrance of them grievous to me? Is it my earnest prayer that I may be pardoned for them, for Christ's sake, and cleansed from them in his atoning blood? Trusting in him, by faith, do I take to myself the comfort of pardon, and endeavor, by the aid of his Spirit, so to live as to find for myself, and give to others, the evidence that I am forgiven?

Repentance begins in humiliation of heart, and ends in reformation of the life. He that cries to have sin taken away, confesses that it lies upon him, and pleads for pardon and acceptance through him whose blood cleanseth from all sin. He that sincerely asks forgiveness will earnestly strive for holiness. He will look to Christ, not only for justification, but also for sanctification.

*

Thou who art merciful, as well as just,
Incline thine ear to me, a child of dust!
Not what I would, O Lord, I offer thee,

Alas! but what I can,
As but a sinful man.

Accept then, I entreat, my humble prayer.
Four things which are not in thy treasury
I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition—

My nothingness, my wants,
My sins, and my contrition;
Oh! meet my needs for all, from thy rich mercy free!
—SOUTHEY.

Thou wilt show me the path of life.—Ps. xvi. 11.

HAVE I committed myself, with all my interests, for time and eternity, into the hands of God through Christ Jesus? Do I look to him for pardon and acceptance, and for light to guide me in the way to heaven? Do I remember that if I make his glory my chief aim, he will make both my present and future happiness his constant care? And do I always endeavor to feel that the path by which he is leading me is the one that will best conduct me to the heavenly rest?

What we want in religion is not new light, but new sight; not new paths, but new zeal to walk in the old paths; not new duties, but new strength from on high to fulfill those that are plain before us. *

God would not suffer his people to be tempted, if his grace were not sufficient for them, not only to save them from harm, but also to make them gainers by it, so that in the end it shall work for their highest good.—M. HENRY.

Thrice happy world, where idle, gilded toys
No more disturb our thoughts or mar our joys.
There reigns the eternal sun, with an unclouded ray;
There all is calm as night, yet all immortal day;
There light and shade no more succeed by turns,
But truth for ever shines, and love for ever burns.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.—LAM. iii. 24.

IS my faith such as gives me the comfort of a well-founded hope in Christ as my portion? Is he my resting-place in the midst of the world's storms and tempests, and the portion of my soul for ever? Do I rejoice in the comfort of this assurance? Does it strengthen me for duty, support me in trial, cheer me in the hour of despondency, and point me continually to the great recompense of reward in heaven?

Faith and hope, though distinct, are vitally united. They come from the same source, are sustained by the same evidence, are exercised on the same realities. Faith is the perceiving; hope the anticipating faculty. Faith sees heaven opened; hope says you are on your way to it. Faith comes by hearing; hope by experience. Faith has respect to the truth of the word; hope to its fulfillment. Faith looks to doctrine and promise; hope to reward. Faith is founded on what is in the Bible; hope on what is in heaven!—STANFORD.

The heart that trusts for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs.

Come good or ill,
Whate'er to-day or morrow brings,
It is His will;
And so the soul in hope rejoices still.

Abide with us.—LUKE xxiv. 29.

ABOVE all things, do I desire that God should be with me constantly? Do I pray that my heart may be made a habitation fit for the indwelling of the Holy One? Do I endeavor to avoid sin, to shun the very appearance of evil, to seek spirituality of thought and feeling, that I may not grieve him from my soul? Is the door of my heart always open for Christ? Does my desire for his presence and love surpass all other considerations?

Christ is always with his people, if by faith they keep near to him. He is with them to counsel in difficulty, to strengthen in weakness, to comfort in sorrow, to guide in duty, to deliver in danger, to crown them with everlasting life in the very article of death. Thanks be to God for a union so unspeakably blessed. *

Our happiness is secured in One who was not only a Teacher in the past, and a Guide to generations that are gone, but who is for all his people, and in all ages, a living Saviour and an ever-present Friend.

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness thickens; Lord, with me abide!
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, oh abide with me!
 Swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys decline, its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see!
 O thou who changest not, abide with me!

—H. F. LYTE.

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.—HEB. xiii. 5

IN all times of perplexity, or doubt, or fear—in the hour of deep affliction and trial, do I keep in mind this blessed promise? Do not all God's mercies in the past, as well as all his pledges for the future, give full ground for the assurance that he will provide for the present? And in this confidence may not my soul be at rest? Is it my constant prayer, that I may more and more trust his providence to provide for all my need?

Those who are the subjects of Christ's love, he will never leave. For he pardoned them when they were enemies, and he will not leave them now they are his friends.—CHARNOCK.

When God has said, “Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,” what more can you need? If a man cannot bear his whole weight on a promise like this, then what can support him? The everlasting rocks would be insufficient. Lay it up, then, among your choicest treasures. Hide it in your heart. Rest upon it with unwavering faith. Call it to your aid in every emergency; and you shall find it more precious than gold; yea, than much fine gold.

*

Dost thou ask when comes his hour?

’Tis when he can aid thee best;

Trust his faithfulness and power,

Trust in him, and quiet rest.

Suffer, hope, and calmly wait;

Jesus never comes too late!

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.—Ps. iv. 6.

ABOVE all things do I desire the favor of God, and that I may live in the light of his countenance? Do I pray that I may be one with him, so that his perfect peace shall keep me continually? Do I endeavor so to live as to honor him? Is it my chief desire, and earnest prayer, that my soul may be filled with his divine light, and that I may know, in my own experience, what it is to enjoy constantly the light of his favor, and the indwelling of his Holy Spirit?

Lord, let there be light, and I shall see light. I shall see the way and not wander; the truth, and shun error; life, and escape death.—QUARLES.

There are no joys like those which the gospel imparts; none so solid, so exquisite, so heartrefining, so enduring. The false pleasures of the world, its bewildering excitements, its intoxicating gayeties, its lying vanities—all are but a cheat upon the senses, that leaves their deluded votaries in deeper gloom. It belongs to the glorious gospel alone to afford substantial and enduring joy.—BROCK.

Great God! thou art the flowing spring of light;
 Enrich mine eyes with thy refulgent ray:
 Thou art my guide, direct my steps aright;
 I have no other light, no other way.
 I'll trust my God, and him alone pursue;
 His law shall be my path; his heavenly light my clue.

—QUARLES.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.—
JAMES i. 12.

CAN I justly lay claim to the blessing promised to those who endure as well as suffer? With patience and constancy, do I resist alike the covert allurement, and the open and bold temptation? Do I remember that the tried Christian shall be the one crowned; and that the cross is but for a little while, but the crown is eternal? Is the love of Christ so strong in my heart as to give the victory over every temptation? —

O Lord, give me strength of resolution; and when I know a thing is wrong, help me to have done with it; and when I see it is right, help me to make haste, and delay not to keep thy commandments.—
SPURGEON.

As the sentinel, when he sees the enemies approaching, does not attempt himself to assail them, but at once gives the alarm to the commander that he may repel their attack, so the Christian does not attempt in his own strength to fight temptation, but finds his safety in perceiving its approach, and seeking by prayer for divine help to overcome it.—J. MASON.

Still near me, O my Saviour, stand,
And guard in fierce temptation's hour;
Hide in the hollow of thine hand;
Show forth in me thy saving power;
Still be thine arm my sure defence,
Nor earth, nor hell shall pluck me thence!

Choose you this day whom ye will serve.—JOSH. xxiv. 15.

HAVE I made religion my serious and deliberate choice? Is mine that better part that can never be taken away? Does the fact of having to take up the cross daily, make the thought of religion unpleasant to me? And if so, can I expect a heavenly crown? Ought I to hesitate a moment between the things of time and those of eternity? Do I pray for grace and strength to make the right choice while it is called to-day?

Let us resolve upon a life of serious godliness, not merely because we know no other way, but because upon search we can find no better.—MATTHEW HENRY.

If we make religion our business, God will make it our blessedness.—ADAM.

How dangerous to defer the momentous reformation which conscience is solemnly pressing on the heart. If neglected, the difficulty and indisposition increase every day. The mind is receding, degree after degree, from the warm and hopeful zone; till at last it will enter the arctic circle, and become fixed in relentless and eternal ice.—JOHN FOSTER.

'Tis not for man to trifle; life is brief,
And sin is here—
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have not time to sport away the hours;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.—1 PET. v. 7.

DO I endeavor, habitually, to obey this command of love, and cast all my care on the Lord? Or do I allow needless anxiety; and fear the possible troubles of the future, which may never come; and brood over the little worries of life till I nurse them into great ones? And if so, is not this a practical distrust of God's providence, and a practical disbelief of his ability and willingness to care for me? Do I ask for grace and faith, in this, as in all things, to be enabled to take God at his word?

He that will watch providences, will never want providences to watch; and he that will trust Providence will find he has a richer and surer inheritance than all the world can give. *

We do not avail ourselves of the riches of God's grace. We love to nurse our cares, and seem uneasy without them. We are commanded to cast them on the Lord; but even when we attempt it, we too often take them up again, as if there were a kind of merit in being burdened. We are like travelers who receive the divinely offered pass to heaven, and then take up our baggage upon our own shoulders, and toil on in the way afoot.

Who would be God's, must trust, not see;
Not murmur, fear, demand;
Most wholly by him guided be,
Led by his loving hand;
Must turn where'er he leads, nor say,
I wonder where he leads the way.

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace. --
JOB xxii. 21.

DO I realize that there is no true, and abiding, and satisfying peace but that which comes from knowing God, and being reconciled to him through Christ? Am I seeking peace from any other source —from the riches, or honors, or pleasures of the world? Or if, being justified by faith, I have peace with God, am I striving to increase it by living near to him? By hearkening to his commandments, do I find my peace is like a river, growing broader, wider, deeper, continually?

Peace is that great calm which comes over the conscience when it sees the atonement sufficient and the Saviour willing. It is the soul which Christ hath pacified, spread out in the serenity of simple faith, and the Lord God, merciful and gracious, smiling over it.—J. HAMILTON.

I do not ask, O Lord! that thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;

Give but a way of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;

Better in darkness just to feel thy hand,
And follow thee.

Joy is like restless day; but peace divine
Like quiet night.

Lead me, O Lord! till perfect day shall shine
Through peace to light.—PROCTER.

Fear not; believe only.—LUKE viii. 50.

IF at any time I have doubts or fears as to my acceptance with God, why is it? Am I not looking too much to self, and too little to Christ; too much to my sinfulness, and too little to his mercy; too much to the evil, and too little to the remedy provided? Do I remember that all I can do or suffer will not atone for sin? And renouncing everything like self-dependence, do I believe only on Christ, and so find peace to my soul?

I must never think my sins too great, too aggravated, too presumptuous to hinder me from fleeing to Christ. Their weight should rather act like the weight of a clock—the heavier it is, the faster it goes.—MCCHEYNE.

The soul is the life of the body; faith is the life of the soul; Christ is the life of faith.—FLAVEL.

Unbelief may, perhaps, tear the copies of the covenant of Christ, but he still keeps the original with him in heaven. Your doubts and fears are no part of that covenant; neither can they change Christ.—RUFER-FORD.

It is not that I feel less weak; but Thou
Wilt be my strength. It is not that I see
Less sin; but more of pardoning love in thee,
And all-sufficient grace. Enough! And now
All fluttering thought is stilled; I only rest,
And feel that thou art near, and know that I am blest!

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.—
Ps. xxiii. 1.

DO I belong to the fold of Christ? And as one of his flock, am I obedient, quiet, gentle, willing to hear his voice, and to be led by him? And as he is my Shepherd, do I trust him for all that I need; and know that if anything is withheld, it is from his wisdom, and for my good? Do I take the comfort here given to all who are followers of Christ, that he is all-sufficient for their wants and difficulties, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly?

He who follows Christ, follows One from whom light streams upon the road before us—showing all its turnings and windings, and enabling us to walk safely, surely, and cheerfully, to the end.—PAYSON.

Christianity did not come from heaven to be the amusement of an idle hour, or the food of mere imagination. No; it is intended to be the guide and guardian and companion of all our hours; the food of our immortal spirits; the serious occupation of our entire existence.—BISHOP JEBB.

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
And the changes that are sure to come,
I do not fear to see;
I only ask for an humble mind,
Intent on pleasing thee.

—A. L. WARING.

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.—Ex. xiv. 15.

HAVE I taken the first step in the divine life? If so, am I making progress in it; advancing in the knowledge of truth, and in the faithful performance of duty? Is sin more and more crucified: my heart's idols one by one abolished; the world less, and eternity more to me? Is Christ's image daily more impressed on my character, and his love more enthroned in my heart? If faint, am I pursuing? And if pursuing, is it in the power of his might?

There is no standing still in the life of faith. No grace will bring thee to heaven without perseverance: not faith, if it be faint and frail; not love, if it decline and wax cold; not humility, if it continue not; not obedience, not repentance, not patience, no, nor any other grace, except they have their perfect work. It is not enough to begin well, except we end well.—
T. BROOKS.

Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed with faith, and winged with prayer;
Heaven's eternal day before thee;
God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thine earthly mission;
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise!

—MONTGOMERY.

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—MARK viii. 36.

DO I remember that though God designs us to find comfort and pleasure in the gifts of his hand, yet he never means us to seek our highest happiness in them? Do I feel that they are but means to an end; and that end, our preparation for an endless existence? And that if allowed to wean our souls from God and his service, then they become sin to us? Is it my earnest prayer, that though in the world, I may not be of it, but that my heart may be fixed supremely on God?

The whole material universe, the heavens and earth, are not equal in value to a single soul; for the soul is immortal, and has capacities for knowledge, virtue, and happiness, which only God can fill.—GROVE.

The poorest Christian who lives in Christ and walks in daily fellowship with God, is happier than the richest votary of the world. Indeed, such only are happy. There is no solid wisdom, no well-founded hope, no true happiness, but in real piety.—EVELYN.

What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in paradise;
That which in Christ is found.
The soul of man,—Jehovah's breath,
That keeps two worlds at strife;
Hell moves beneath to work its death;
Heaven stoops to give it life!
—MONTGOMERY.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—Ps. xc. 12.

DO I constantly keep in view the uncertainty of life, and how short a time at longest I have to live in the world? And do I endeavor so to number my days, as wisely to compare with them the work God has given me to do, that I may be stimulated to diligence, as one that has not long to live? Do I pray for divine aid in this numbering, that it may be blessed to my own highest wisdom and good, and so to the good of others?

Lost wealth may be replaced by industry; lost health, regained by temperance; lost knowledge, restored by study; and even lost reputation won back by penitence and virtue. But who ever looked on his departed hours, or recalled his slighted years, and stamped them with wisdom, or effaced from heaven's record the fearful blot of wasted time?—L. H. SIR GOURNEY.

Why do we heap huge mounds of years before us
and behind,
And scorn the little days that pass, like angels on the
wind?
Each turning round a small, sweet face, as beautiful as
near,
Because it is so small a face we will not see it clear;
And so it turns from us and goes away in sad dis-
dain;
Though we could give our lives for it, it never comes
again —CRAIK.

Repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—ACTS xxvi. 20.

HAVE I sincerely repented of sin? And now, in my daily life, do I endeavor to do works meet for repentance? In humility, in faith, and with constant prayer, am I seeking to do the will of my Father in heaven, remembering that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith, without works, is dead also? Do I bear in mind that it is not enough to profess to know God, unless in works I do not deny him? As the evidence for myself, and as an example to others, do I endeavor to show my faith in Christ by works of obedience for him?

If you would be good, be diligent in doing good.
The exercise of grace increases it. *

Ever be occupied with some direct effort to do good, and be ambitious of doing it for Christ's sake. Seek to leave the world better for your sojourn in it. Whatever you attempt, do it in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, and endeavor to do it so thoroughly, and to follow it up so resolutely, that the result shall be evident as well as good.—J. HAMILTON.

Labor is sweet, for thou hast toiled;
And care is sweet, for thou hast cared.
Ah, never let our works be soiled
With strife, or by deceit ensnared.
Through life's long day, and death's dark night,
O gentle Jesus, be ou' light.—FABER.

Enter into thy closet ; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
—MATR. vi. 6.

DO I prize the privilege, of secret prayer in the closet? Where no human eye can see, and no human ear can hear, there do I rejoice to pour out my heart before God, acknowledging every weakness, confessing every error, and asking the special grace that I feel I specially need? Every sin do I bring to him for pardon ; every weakness, for strength ; every sorrow, for comfort ; every trial, for support ; and every perplexity and difficulty and doubt, for light and guidance and direction ? Here do I seek all that I need, for time and eternity ?

I must be often in the closet. God enjoins it. My special necessities demand it. I must do it that I may grow in grace and may not decline in spirituality and wander from God. It is a solemn duty, a glorious and blessed privilege, thus to commune with God ; to breathe his Spirit, and receive the impress of his image upon my heart. Oh, may I ever prize, and seek to improve it. By divine grace I will, till I am raised from prayer on earth to endless praise in heaven. *

Go with pure mind and feeling,
Fling earthly thoughts away,
And in thy chamber kneeling,
In secret often pray.
And he whose voice doth call thee there,
Shall hear and answer all thy prayer.

—LORD MORPETH.

Repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—ACTS xxvi. 20.

HAVE I sincerely repented of sin? And now, in my daily life, do I endeavor to do works meet for repentance? In humility, in faith, and with constant prayer, am I seeking to do the will of my Father in heaven, remembering that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith, without works, is dead also? Do I bear in mind that it is not enough to profess to know God, unless in works I do not deny him? As the evidence for myself, and as an example to others, do I endeavor to show my faith in Christ by works of obedience for him?

If you would be good, be diligent in doing good.
The exercise of grace increases it. *

Ever be occupied with some direct effort to do good, and be ambitious of doing it for Christ's sake. Seek to leave the world better for your sojourn in it. Whatever you attempt, do it in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, and endeavor to do it so thoroughly, and to follow it up so resolutely, that the result shall be evident as well as good.—J. HAMILTON.

Labor is sweet, for thou hast toiled;
And care is sweet, for thou hast cared.
Ah, never let our works be soiled
With strife, or by deceit ensnared.
Through life's long day, and death's dark night,
O gentle Jesus, be our light.—FABER.

Enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
—MATTHEW vi. 6.

D^O I prize the privilege, of secret prayer in the closet? Where no human eye can see, and no human ear can hear, there do I rejoice to pour out my heart before God, acknowledging every weakness, confessing every error, and asking the special grace that I feel I specially need? Every sin do I bring to him for pardon; every weakness, for strength; every sorrow, for comfort; every trial, for support; and every perplexity and difficulty and doubt, for light and guidance and direction? Here do I seek all that I need, for time and eternity? —

I must be often in the closet. God enjoins it. My special necessities demand it. I must do it that I may grow in grace and may not decline in spirituality and wander from God. It is a solemn duty, a glorious and blessed privilege, thus to commune with God; to breathe his Spirit, and receive the impress of his image upon my heart. Oh, may I ever prize, and seek to improve it. By divine grace I will, till I am raised from prayer on earth to endless praise in heaven. *

Go with pure mind and feeling,
Fling earthly thoughts away,
And in thy chamber kneeling,
In secret often pray.
And he whose voice doth call thee there,
Shall hear and answer all thy prayer.

—LORD MORPETH.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN i. 7.

HAVE I come to the fountain that is opened for sin and all uncleanness and washed my soul in its purifying flood? Do I feel that I am a sinner, condemned and lost for ever, unless the precious blood of Christ is sprinkled on my soul? Have I seen and confessed my guilt, and found forgiveness? Have I realized and mourned my sinfulness, and been cleansed from its pollution by that blood which takes away the stain, as well as the power of sin?

All the blessings of salvation came through the precious blood of Christ. If we have redemption, it is through his blood. If we are justified, it is by his blood. If we are washed from our moral stains, it is by the cleansing of his blood. If we have the victory over death, it is by the same blood. If at last we enter heaven, it is because we have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Everything depends on the blood of Christ, and without it there is no remission.—R. NEWTON.

Christ himself thy sins hath borne ;
Weeping soul, no longer mourn.
View him bleeding on the tree,
Pouring out his life for thee ;
There thy every sin he bore ;
Weeping soul, lament no more :
Fix thy hopes on him who died ;
In his work be satisfied !

Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.—HEB. x. 22.

NOW that the way of access to God has been opened by Christ, have I come to him by faith, so as to claim his offer of acceptance? Do I come to him with a true heart, and with sincere desires for a holy life? Has my faith grown to the full persuasion that I am forgiven and accepted through the merits of Christ? Have I that clear assurance of faith, which, taking the Saviour at his word, finds comfort and peace in his promises?

If you have not the faith of assurance, practice at least the faith of adherence. That, surely, is in your power. Cleave to God exactly as if you were certain of being accepted of him at last; and thus fulfilling his own conditions, you will be accepted of him, whether you are assured of it beforehand or not.

I would not give one straw for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come to me in his adultery and talked of his assurance, I should have despised his speech.—JOHN NEWTON.

Be trustful, be steadfast, whatever betide thee ;
Only one thing do thou ask of the Lord
Grace to go forward whatever betide thee,
Simply believing the truth of his word.
Thus shall you walk in the light of his love ;
Thus be assured of your treasure above !

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.—ISA. xxvi. 3.

IN all the pressing duties and trying uncertainties and perplexities of life, do I trust myself entirely to my heavenly Father, and cast all my cares on him? Knowing his wisdom and goodness, and that he cares for every one of his children, am I satisfied with his guidance? Do I find peace in the thought that he is on the throne; and that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, I may always have strong consolation, if I have made him my refuge and my hope?

All experience shows that peace, composure of mind, and quiet or joyous hope, all come from a trusting submission to the divine will; a submission that says from the heart, "Thy will be done;" a submission that disposes one to do or bear, cheerfully, whatever God may appoint. A soul that has attained to this state, though it may still be clogged with many infirmities, has attained to the highest peace of earth and of heaven.—E. PEABODY.

There are briars besetting earth's every path,
And calling for patient care;
And a cross there is, often, in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer.
But a lowly heart that leans on God,
Is happy everywhere.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.—ROM. xii. 11.

DO I bear in mind that the common business of life, as well as its devotional duties, is meant to be a means of grace to me? Into all my business, do I carry the spirit of religion? And in all my religion am I as diligent and earnest as in the most important business? In both do I aim faithfully to serve the Lord? Do I sanctify all my occupations and employments by engaging in them as for Christ, and that I may act as his good and faithful servant?

Remember that the life of man is only to be valued for its usefulness.—BISHOP WILSON.

All the cares, anxieties, duties and toils of life, so far from being hindrances to grace, are designed to be, and to a right spirit are but the means of its development and growth. The pulpit may teach the way of duty, but life is the school in which we are taught to practice it. Every duty is a call to Christian effort; every trial, a summons to patience and submission, and the whole of life but a training school for eternity. *

All may of Thee partake,
Nothing so small may be,
But draws, when acted for thy sake,
Greatness and worth from thee;
If done beneath thy laws,
E'en servile labors shine;
Hallowed all toil, if this the cause,
The meanest work, divine.

—GEORGE HERBERT.

Power belongeth unto God.—Ps. lxii. 11.

DO I rejoice to ascribe power to God, and to feel that he is almighty, both as the Sovereign of the universe, and as the God of grace? Is not his power a sufficient reason why I should trust him, and feel my dependence on him, and ask his aid in every difficulty, knowing that he is willing as well as able to do all things for the good of them that love and trust him?

All things and beings, all that life makes known or death conceals, everything within the boundless possibilities of creating wisdom and power, is mine, for God, the almighty Creator and Fountain of all, is mine.—
J. CAIRD.

We need keeping, for we are weak, wayward, and prone to wander. God will have us kept, and kept surely; and so he keeps us himself. With his everlasting arms beneath me, I am for ever safe.—J. SMITH.

Let us heartily rejoice in the Strength of our salvation, and go boldly in the way of his laws, and seek safety under the shadow of his wing. And let us put our cause into the hand of that great Advocate, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to him.

And can the almighty King
Of glory condescend?
And will he write his name,
 My Father and my Friend?
I love his name; I love his word;
Join all my powers to serve the Lord.

—WATTS.

If ye love me, keep my commandments.—JOHN xiv. 15.

DO I, indeed, love Christ? Does my love to him show itself in constant obedience to his commands? When duties press, and difficulties gather in the way, am I more anxious to be faithful to the duties than to know what events may be? Do I find my comfort in the way of obedience to the Saviour? If I expect the support and comfort of the Spirit, must I not follow the leadings of the Spirit?

It is but a small thing to see Christ in a book, as men see the world on a map. But to come near to Christ; to love him; to embrace him; to obey him, is quite another thing.—RUTHERFORD.

When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of an orator, what the second, and what the third, each time he replied, "Action." So if any one ask me what is the first, second, and third thing in a Christian, I would answer "Obedience." Luther says he would rather obey than work miracles; and God says, obedience is better than sacrifice.—T. BROOKS.

Lay upon me Thy commands,
Fill my heart, employ my hands;
Let me on thine errands run,
Till the work of life is done.
Living thus to worship thee,
Leath shall prove new life to me,
Where, with all the conflict o'er,
Rest remaineth evermore.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry.—Eccl. vii. 9.

DO I endeavor at all times to govern my temper with wisdom and grace, seeking with earnest prayer, to repress the first rising of evil feeling or passion in my heart? In thought, word and deed, do I cultivate the habit of self-control, remembering that better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city? If provoked and tempted to give way to anger, do I remember the blessed Saviour, who when he was reviled, reviled not again? In all things, do I seek to cherish his spirit?

I will suffer a thousand wrongs, rather than offer one, and an hundred rather than return one. I have ever found that to strive with my superior is fatuous; with my equal, doubtful; with my inferior, sordid and base; with any, full of unquietness.—BISHOP HALL.

I am naturally as impatient and irritable as any, but when I find anger, or passion, or any other evil temper arise in my mind, I go at once to my Saviour, and confessing my sin, give myself up to be managed and controlled by him.—CLARKE.

Cherish kindly, loving feelings,
While you here on earth may stay;
They will scatter light and sunshine,
On your own and others' way;
They will make life's pathway brighter,
All around you they will bless,
And o'er every lot and station
Pour fresh streams of happiness.

—KIDDER.

I give myself unto prayer.—Ps. cix. 4.

DO I love communion with God in prayer, counting it alike a joy and a duty? Am I as earnest in praying for spiritual blessings, as I am in seeking temporal advantages? Not only in perplexities and troubles, but in all the affairs of life, do I go habitually, for guidance and help, to the throne of grace? Do I expect an answer, though it may not be as I would desire, or in the way I might think best?

The body of our prayer is the sum of our duty; and as we must ask of God whatsoever we need, so we must labor for all that we ask. Every petition to God is a rule for our life—a precept for our conduct—a perpetual monition to duty. By what we require of God, we see what he requires of us.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

He that knows how to pray, has the secret of safety in prosperity, and of support in trouble; the art of overcoming every enemy, and of turning every loss into a gain; the power of soothing every care; of subduing every passion; and of adding a relish to every enjoyment. The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.—W. JAY.

Hast thou a hope from which thy heart
Would almost feel it death to part?
Entreat thy God that hope to crown,
Or give thee strength to lay it down.
Whate'er the care that breaks thy rest,
Whate'er the wish that swells thy breast,
Take to thy God that wish, that care,
And change anxiety to prayer!

Hope maketh not ashamed.—ROM. v. 5.

WHY should I be ashamed of my hope in Christ, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, and as my Saviour? Is there not every reason, rather, to glory in the hope, and in him who is its everlasting foundation? Amid all the changes and uncertainties—the sins and sorrows of life, is it not a matter of thankfulness, and joy, and triumph, that I have a hope which is an anchor to the soul, and which has the promise of the life that now is, and also of that which is to come?

Experience of God is a prop to our hope. He that hath delivered, doth and will. Experience of ourselves helps to evidence our sincerity.—M. HENRY.

I have such a hope that with it I can calmly plunge into eternity.—A. FULLER.

Hope takes fast hold of heaven itself. It is like the morning light; the least beam of it shall go on to complete sunshine; it shall shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day.—T. BROOKS.

Faint, and sinking on the road,
Still I cling to thee, my God.
Bending 'neath a weight of woes,
Harassed by a thousand foes,
Hope still chides my rising fears,
Joy still mingles with my tears;
For thy word still sounds to me,
“As thy days thy strength shall be.”

—H. F. LYTE.

*Who hath despised the day of small things?—ZECH.
iv. 10.*

DO I feel the vast importance of little things, whether in ordinary life, or in matters of religion? Am I careful to encourage, not to repress even the faintest strugglings after good, whether in myself, or in others? Do I feel that God does not despise the day of small things; that the bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench, till he bring forth judgment unto victory? In little things, as well as great, do I strive to serve him?

He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.—*ECCLESIASTICUS.*

In all the history of our Saviour, there is not one wrathful sentence—not one speech of condemnation for the weak and sorrowing. He had sympathy and compassion for all infirmities; for sorrow, for sickness, for all who were penitent. He encouraged the feeblest and weakest to come to him.—*J. BATE.*

Sow when the morning breaketh,
In beauty o'er the land;
And when the evening falleth,
Withhold not thou thine hand.
Sow though the rock repel thee,
In its cold and sterile pride;
Some cleft there may be riven,
Where the little seed may hide.

I have set before thee an open door.—REV. iii. 8.

AS Christ has opened the door of life, have I, by faith, entered? Have I accepted the full and free salvation which he has offered for my acceptance? Do I realize that this door will not always be open; and that if God's offers are rejected or neglected, it may soon be too late to enter it? If I have entered, am I in earnest to go forward in the way of life? Do I seek to lead others to enter in, and be safe?

The carnal mind, which is enmity, fortifies the soul against God as with bars and doors; averts it from him; carries it with a horrid, guilty consciousness, which, in the end, fills it with eternal despair, and enwraps it in the blackness of darkness for ever.—JOHN HOWE.

Those who would go to heaven when they die, must begin their heaven now, while they live.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Make good use of time, if thou lovest eternity. Yesterday cannot be recalled. To-morrow cannot be secured. Now is the accepted time. If to-day is lost, it is lost for ever.

Silent, like men in solemn haste,
Girded wayfarers of the waste,
We pass out at the world's wide gate,
Turning our back on all its state:
We press along the narrow road,
That leads to life, to bliss, to God.

—H. BONAR.

What's ever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.—COL. iii. 23.

AM I a cheerful, willing, earnest servant of Christ? Is it my sincere desire that my life should be more and more devoted to God? Though I cannot do great things, do I remember that my service will be acceptable in whatsoever may be done, if undertaken in a right spirit, and in dependence on divine aid? Is it my encouragement, that though man looketh to the outward appearance, God looketh on the heart?

No man need think he can ever become eminent in anything, unless he work at it with an earnestness bordering on enthusiasm.—ROBERT HALL.

Idleness is the very rust and canker of the soul; the devil's cushion, and pillow, and chief reposal; his very tide-time of temptation, as it were, wherein he carries with much care, and without contradiction, the current of our corrupt affections to any cursed sin.
—BOLTON.

One by one thy duties wait thee;
Let thy whole strength go to each; /
Let no future dreams elate thee;
Learn thou first what these can teach.
Every hour that fleets so slowly,
Has its task to do or bear.
Luminous the crown and holy,
When each gem is set with care.

—A. PROCTER.

Lest Satan should get the advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.—2 Cor. ii. 11.

DO I always bear in mind that Satan is a personal enemy, subtle, vigilant, and ever seeking to entrap the unwary and careless in his snares? Do I realize that he is a watchful enemy, ready to take every advantage of us, and to deceive and allure us to evil? Do I seek for strength to resist him, and for grace to avoid his devices even though he may come as an angel of light? Do I keep near to Christ, that in him I may be safe?

Even the devil has one good quality, that if we resist him he will flee from us; and the strength of Christ is always freely offered to us, that we may be able to do it. *

The first step toward strength, is to know our weakness. We are to be steadfast, not in self, but in faith; confident in God; relying on his promises, his wisdom, his power and love. In this spirit we are to meet temptation, feeling that both it and the tempter himself are under God's control. *

Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.
Though fierce the fight, why quit the field?
Why should I either fly or yield,
Since Jesus is my sword and shield?

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.—Ps. cxli. 3.

DO I keep in mind the startling declaration of God's word, that "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, setting on fire the course of nature, and that it is set on fire of hell"? And do I strive, habitually, to govern my tongue, that I may not be surprised into idle, or foolish, or sinful words—words dishonoring to God, or unkind or injurious to man? Do I endeavor always to speak for good, or else be silent? —

If used aright, there is nothing better than the tongue: it is the organ of truth and reason; the bond of civil society; the medium of sympathy and kindness and love to our fellow-men, and the instrument of our praise and worship of God. But if used improperly, there is nothing worse than the tongue: it is the instrument of all strife and contentions; the source of division, and bitterness, and wars; the organ of error, and falsehood, and slander and blasphemies.

*

Words are mighty, words are living;
Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
With heaven's light upon their wings.
Every word has its own spirit,
True or false, that never dies;
Every word our lips may utter,
Sounds in God's ear in the skies!

—A. PROCTER.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—TITUS ii. 10.

BY my sincere love of the truth, and by my faithful conduct as a Christian, do I let my light shine, and so commend religion to all about me? Do I lay aside the false idea that I must have a certain position in the world's estimation, before I can have influence for good over others? And do I endeavor habitually so to live, that all may take knowledge of me that I have been with Jesus, and so be led to him?

We can do more good by being good than in any other way.—ROWLAND HILL.

By doing without weariness, and suffering without murmuring; by having your hands active in God's service, and your feet swift to run in the way of his commandments—thus may your bodies be used by the spirits within them, for the hallowed service of the Master. Dust they are; but they can bring praise to him who hath formed them.—T. HAWKES.

Who are a blessing? Who themselves the blest?
Who win the wandering to the Saviour's rest?
They who have kept their sympathies awake,
And scattered joy for more than custom's sake;
Steadfast and tender in the hour of need;
Gentle in thought, benevolent in deed;
Their looks have power to make dissensions cease;
Their smiles are pleasant, and their souls are peace.

My times are in thy hand.—Ps. xxxi. 15.

Do I feel that God's providence is over all, and that all my times are in his hand, and are controlled and directed by him? Is it not a comfort and support, to know that he is ordering all for my highest good if I trust him? Where my own wisdom and courage and strength would fail, do I not know that he is all-sufficient; and that with more than a father's tenderness he watches over every step of my way, and will guide me safely to himself in heaven?

One minute sooner than God's time, would not be his people's mercy. Our times, or opportunities are in his hand; and therefore he knows the best time for our deliverance, and we must wait for it.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Creatures may fail you, but God never will. He will be more than a father, even a God to you. He will order his providence for your good; and carry on his work in thee; and fulfill his promises to thee. Only believe, and you shall find all things work for your good, both for time and eternity.

The God who made my heart, is he alone
That of himself both can and will
Give rest unto my thoughts, and fill
Them full of all content and quietness;
That so I may possess
My soul in patience,
Until he find it time to call me hence.

—QUARLES.

God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—ROM. v. 8.

IN view of God's wonderful, unfathomable love as manifest in redemption, do I give him the return that he asks, namely, the love and homage of my heart and life? Do I realize the fact that though God hates the sin, he loves the sinner, even when in the sinfulness of his sins; and that to win us back to himself, he gave his well-beloved Son to die that we might live? Does his love to me, lead me to live for him?

The wonder in heaven, which eclipses all other marvels in heaven, earth and hell, is, and ever will be, the unspeakable love of God in Christ, by which salvation is freely offered to the very chief of sinners.—OWEN.

All earthly love is as nothing to the love of God. He so loved us as to give his Son to die for us; as to impart his Holy Spirit to us; as to prepare the kingdom of glory for us; as to give us exceeding great and precious promises; as to make us his children and heirs for ever. How then ought we to love him!

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love, so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

—WATTS.

Thy will be done.—LUKE xi. 2.

HAVE I learned this most important lesson, ever to desire that God's will may be done in all things? Do I cheerfully bow my own will to his? Am I so thoroughly satisfied that his will is always wise and good, and that he requires nothing that is not for my highest welfare, that I yield to him cheerfully and thankfully? Do I study God's word, and watch his providence, and pray for the light of his Holy Spirit, that I may know his will? And when known, am I willing, at all times, to do or suffer it?

To worship a graven image is not worse idolatry, than to set up self-will, and always follow it, instead of conforming to, and complying with the divine and eternal will of God.—J. SMITH.

Few things are worse for us than to have our own way, and be left to our own will. The work of sanctification is but slight, if we are willing to carve for ourselves. The wisest, holiest, safest, happiest, best state for us to be in, is that in which, from the heart, we can, in all circumstances, say, “Not my will, b·t thine be done.”

*

My God, my Father, while I stray,
Far from my home, on life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from the heart to say,

Thy will be done!

Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with thine, and take away,
All that now makes it hard to say,

Thy will be done.—C. ELLIOTT.

Thou hast loosed my bonds.—Ps. cxvi. 16.

HAVE I, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, been freed from the bondage of sin? And do I rejoice, with thankfulness, in the liberty of God's children? Do I feel that I am free not only from the condemnation, but from the reigning power of sin? And do I so prize the blessedness of my state as a new creature in Christ Jesus, that I seek to lead others to the same blessedness?

He who has received the spirit of adoption, no longer acts as a slave who regards his duties as a burden and endeavors to lessen them. On the contrary, he delights in duty, because he delights in God. He is at home with God his Father, and as it were conversing with him while engaged in his service.—MILNOR.

The Christian is free from the charge of sin, because Christ was his substitute; free from its guilt and condemnation, through faith in the person and work of Jesus; free from the love and power and slavery of sin, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Blessed freedom, that delivers from all the evil of sin, and raises to a life of holiness and to heaven. *

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside.—COWPER.

Ignorance bound me; Satan tossed me;
But Jesus found me, and Satan lost me.

—BUNYAN.

Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.—ISA. xlvi. 22.

DO I look to Christ, and only to him, for salvation? Am I strong in the faith that he is both able and willing to save me, and that from him I may receive pardon for the guilt of sin, and strength to overcome its power? Am I looking away from the darkness of self, to the light that is in him; from the ever-varying frames and feelings of my own heart, to him who is the same from everlasting to everlasting?

Faith is the soul's outward, not its inward look. The object on which it fixes its eye, is not the heart's ever-varying frames, but the never-varying Christ.—
BAILLIE.

Too often, and almost unconsciously, we look at the Sun of righteousness as it is reflected in our own troubled waters, rather than by an upward look to it, as it really is, in the heavens. The very reverse of this is what we should do. We should look to promises, not feelings. The latter change, while the former are like the everlasting hills, that cannot be moved.

*

Come, ye souls by sin afflicted,
Bowed with fruitless sorrow down,
By the broken law convicted,
Through the cross behold the crown!
Look to Jesus;
Mercy flows from him alone!—J. HART.

The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—1 PET. iv. 7.

DO I bear in mind how fast life is passing away, and what momentous issues are dependent on it? And do I cherish, habitually, that serious frame of mind and heart which becomes one who, at any moment, may be called to eternity? While I pray, do I watch; and while I watch, do I pray? And through both watchfulness and prayer, is it my earnest endeavor ever to be found faithful in duty and prepared for the coming of the Son of man?

Prayer, without watching, is hypocrisy; and watching, without prayer, is presumption.

Pressing emergencies are to be met with corresponding efforts. We must proportion our strength and exertion to the tasks and duties and dangers before us, doing with our might what we can do, and praying with our might that God may do for us. If we do all that we can to stand, and then fear lest we may fall, by the grace of God we are safe. *

Watch! 'tis your Lord's command;
And while we speak, he's near:
Mark the first signal of his hand,
And ready all appear.
Oh happy servant he,
In such a posture found;
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honor crowned!—DODDRIDGE.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.
—HAGGAI i. 5.

DO I realize the importance of self-knowledge, especially as to spiritual things? Do I apply my mind seriously to the important work of self-examination, comparing myself, both as to motives and conduct, with the teaching of God's word? Do I look to my principles, to my motives, to my feelings, to my aims, to my conduct, and ask if they are all such as God can approve? Has the serious consideration of my ways led me to amend whatever may have been amiss, and to aim at all that is right?

The sins of men go before them to the judgment, and will be ready to meet them there. What a fearful meeting! How impossible to escape from their accusing and their consequences.—JEFFRIES.

Consideration is the bed where the incorruptible seed is sown; and on the ground thus prepared the Sun of righteousness doth shine, and by his warmth produces in the soul all manner of pleasant and heavenly fruits.—ANTHONY HORNBECK.

The world's a labyrinth, whose anfractuous ways
Are all composed of rubs, and crookt meanders.
No resting here: he's hurried back who stays
A thought: and he that goes unguided, wanders.
Her way is dark; her path untrod, uneven:
So hard the way from earth; so hard the way to
heaven.—QUARLES.

Give me thine heart.—PROV. xxiii. 26.

AM I willing that God should reign in my heart supremely and alone? Is there anything I would keep back from him; any feeling, or desire, or object that comes between my soul and its entire allegiance to Christ? Is the world, in any of its forbidden forms, holding a first place in my affections? Do I always bear in mind, that, as I am bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, I am not my own, but God's?

The greatest difficulty in conversion, is, to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion, is, to keep the heart with God.—FLAVEL.

The heart is that which God requires, and calls for from every one of us. Whatever we give, if we do not give him our hearts, it will not be accepted.—M. HENRY.

Unless I give my heart wholly to God, and make religion my great and engrossing concern, I shall be a stranger not only to duty, but to all solid peace and enjoyment.—CHALMERS.

Blessed Saviour! thee I love,
All my other joys above;
Thine, entirely thine, am I,
Thine to live, and thine to die;
Height, or depth, or earthly power,
Ne'er shall hide my Saviour more;
Ever shall my glory be,
Only, only, only thee!—G. DUFFIELD

Where I am, there shall also my servant be.—JOHN xii. 26.

DO I rejoice in this promise of the blessed Saviour, and look forward, in hope, to being with him for ever in heaven? Do I regard this world as but a school of discipline and training for the heavenly state? Am I following my divine Master now, as one who looks forward to the honor and blessedness of sharing his glory hereafter? Is it my great desire and effort to be found faithful unto death, that a crown of life may be mine?

Our Saviour's last prayer on earth pleads earnestly for the glorification of his servants with himself. His parting wish is to meet them in heaven; as if his earthly jewels were needed to make his crown complete; as if the happiness and joy of his people were the needed complement of his own.

For ever with Jesus! Then for ever in light, without darkness; in pleasure without pain; in plenty without want; in holiness without sin; joint heirs with Christ, sharing his glory and blessedness; shining in his light; for ever ravished with his love! What a glorious prospect! Bless the Lord for its certainty.

Soon we shall with those in glory,
His transcendent grace relate;
Gladly sing the amazing story
Of his dying love so great;
In that blessed contemplation
We for evermore shall dwell,
Crown'd with bliss and consolation
Such as none below can tell.

—BAKEWELL.

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.—Ps. lxviii. 19.

DO I feel that every blessing I receive cometh down from above? Do I thoughtfully consider how multiplied these blessings are, and how varied and constant their bestowment? Life, health, food, raiment, friends, all that makes life pleasant or dear to me, and so the light of the gospel, the gift of a Saviour, the influence of the Holy Spirit, and all that tends to prepare me for heaven—do they not all come from God? For all do I praise him? Do I show forth my gratitude in my life?

They that deserve nothing, should be thankful for anything. Bless God for what you have, and trust him for what you want.—J. MASON.

Mercy is the fairest letter in Jehovah's name, and love and goodness the noblest attributes of his nature.
—THORNTON.

He that daily loads us with his benefits, will not put us off with present things for a portion, but will be the God of our salvation. What he gives us now, he gives as the God of our salvation, and as an earnest of it, pursuant to his own great plan of saving us.—MATTHEW HENRY.

I want to praise, with a life renewed,
As I never have praised before;
With voice, and pen, and song, and speech,
To thank thee more and more;
And for all thy gifts, my gratitude,
Rejoicingly outpour.

But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—LUKE x. 42.

IN all my plans and aims, do I take into view my entire existence? Do I think and act, not merely for this life, but for endless ages? Do I seek after that real godliness, which is the one thing needful, and which has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come? Bearing in mind that we cannot serve two masters, do I make God my supreme choice and delight? Feeling that the world cannot satisfy the soul, have I chosen that good part which is satisfying, sure, and eternal? —

Earthly occupations may engage, but they must not engross our thoughts. They must have a share in our hearts; but let us not forget that our well-being through eternity demands that it should be only a subordinate share.—HAGGITT.

God has directed us so to live, and we may so live, as to make the best of both worlds. We have a life on earth, and must attend to its duties; but we should make every one of them a means of grace. We have a life beyond this world, stretching on through eternity, and we should so improve our probation here that our endless life may be one of endless blessedness. *

Come, says Jesus' sacred voice,
Come, and make my paths your choice;
Hither come, for here is found,
Balm that flows for every wound;
Peace, that ever shall endure;
Rest, eternal, sacred, sure.—BARBAULD.

Behold he prayeth.—Acts ix. 11.

HAVE I this evidence of being truly converted, that I love the Spirit and the place of prayer? Do I pray with earnestness and faith, as Paul prayed? Do I feel that it is as impossible for the soul truly to live, without prayer, as it is for the body to live without breath? Do I believe that to be prayerless is to be graceless? When I pray for what seems a right object, do I do all in my power to act for it?

Sinning will make us leave off praying; or praying will make us leave off sinning.—DYER.

What God has promised, we must pray for. He will be inquired of, and especially for divine instruction and guidance.—MATTHEW HENRY.

If we do but lisp, even though we silently address God without opening our lips, yet we cry to him in the inmost recesses of the heart, and God always listens to the sincere direction of the heart to him.—CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath;
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.
O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord! teach us how to pray!

—MONTGOMERY.

The Lor l is nigh unto all that call upon him.—Ps. cxlv. 18.

IS it not a blessed assurance, that God is ever ready to hear and answer the prayers of his children ? And do I improve this privilege of God's willingness, by sending up my thoughts in prayer to him, whenever and wherever I feel my need ? Is it not a cause of devout thankfulness, that God is always within hearing of prayer, and that I am always within reach of his help ? At all times do I rejoice in his nearness, and love to hold communion with him ?

No prayer is ever lost. They are lasting and living things ; and are, as it were, indented around the throne of God. And when he looks round, he sees the prayers of his people covered with the sweet incense of the Saviour's intercession.—BICKERSTETH.

What is only matter of prayer on earth, will be matter of praise in heaven.

The answer to prayer is slow ; but the force of prayer cumulative. Not till life is over, is the whole answer to it given, and the whole strength it has brought us fully understood.

Where two or three together meet,
 Lo, in the midst, is One,
 Who hears believing hearts that beat,
 With life his breath begun.
 Ere we can pour our earnest cry,
 He listens from his throne on high !

He hath prepared for them a city.—HEB. xi. 16.

AS God has prepared a city, do I bear in mind that all who would enter it must be a prepared people; and that if I would attain to its blessedness, I must live a prepared life? Am I working the works God has given me to do? Am I endeavoring to lay up my treasure in heaven? By a life of faith and holy obedience, do I show that I am seeking the city that hath eternal foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God?

The great Counselor bids us follow at his beck, often through clouds and darkness, promising eternal sunshine on the other side, in the prepared city. There we shall see how every rough wind has but hastened our bark nearer to the desired haven.—T. BROOKS.

If there be such glory in God's footstool on earth, what will there be in his throne? If he gives us so much in the land of our pilgrimage, what will he not give us in our own country? If so much to his enemies on earth, what will he not give to his friends in their everlasting home in heaven?—SPENCER.

Onward! the goal that thou seekest,
Is worthy the quest of a life;
And love can give to the weakest,
Courage and strength for the strife.
Onward; our cry for ever,
Till the glorious goal be won,
'Mid the brightness, fading never,
Of heaven's unclouded sun!

Take heed unto thyself.—1 TIM. iv. 16.

HAVE I taken heed to myself in the highest sense, by going to Christ for salvation? Do I rest all my hopes on him? Do I take heed that my life and conduct be such as become a follower of Jesus—a child of the most high God? Is my faith founded on the teachings of God's word, and my life conformed to its precepts? Do I endeavor to lead others to the only divine way of truth and duty?

Whatever a man may be doing, as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. If his aims are low, and his plans worldly, so is he. If his motives are pure, and his purposes high and heavenly, so is he. And as he is, so is his work.—RUSKIN.

A religious life involves self-denial, and constant watchfulness. We have to beware of the world without, and take heed to ourselves within. Our wills, desires, affections, habits, lives, are to be conformed to the will of God; and that from the full conviction, that what he wills is the perfection of virtue and right, and at the same time our happiness. *

Tremblers beside the opening grave,
Father! we call on thee to save,
By power divine!
In mercy hear our suppliant breath;
Keep us, through faith, in life or death,
Thine, only thine!

He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.
—LUKE xi. 13.

IF the Holy Spirit has not come to my heart, is it not through my own neglect to ask? If he does not habitually dwell with me, is it not because I have not earnestly prayed for his presence? Do I remember that I can never better please God than when I come and ask for his Spirit to be with me, to sanctify and comfort and guide? Do I pray for his blessed influence for others, as well as for my own soul?

As the air is all around us, and we have only to open our lungs to receive it, so the Holy Spirit is ever ready and waiting to come to us, if we will but open our hearts to his blessed influence. The only unconditional promise in the entire Bible, is, that God will give his Holy Spirit to all who ask it. *

Those who do not frequent God's throne of mercy on earth, will never bow at his throne of glory in heaven. Not a single blessing is promised in God's word, either for this world or the next, to those who do not pray.

Holy Ghost! with light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away;
Turn my darkness into day.
With thy power and joy divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol-throne;
Reign supreme, and reign alone!

—A. REED.

Canst thou by searching, find out God?—JOB xi. 7.

DO I realize that the infinite depths of God's wisdom and power cannot be fathomed, nor the brightness of his glory described, nor the rich treasures of his goodness and mercy be numbered? Am I satisfied to know, though I cannot comprehend God; to adore and love though I cannot fully understand? Is it my great object to know his will, to obey his commandments, and in all things to trust him?

It is foolish in us to muse on vanity when we have the character and love of God to think of; to let the mill grind chaff, when there is such plenty of corn at hand.—MANTON.

If you would fully believe, says Luther, you must crucify that question, “Why?” God would not have us too full of wherefores. We must follow his commands without questioning. Abraham subscribed a blank when God called him out of his own country; but he was led to a better.—BRIDGE.

In its sublime research, philosophy
May measure out the ocean's deep; may count
The sands, or the sun's rays. But, God, for thee
There is no weight or measure. None can mount
Up to thy mysteries. Reason's brightest spark,
Though kindled by thy light, in vain would try
To trace thy counsels, infinite and dark;
And thought is lost ere thought can soar so high,
Even as past moments in eternity!

Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—MATT. vii. 14.

DO I always keep in mind the fact, that the way to heaven is narrow and difficult, and that to walk in it demands self-denial and effort? If I would be kept in it, must I not resist temptation, and turn aside from allurement, and engage in duties that at times are painful to flesh and blood? But in it, shall I not enjoy God's favor, which is life; and at the end be sure of everlasting life? Is not this thought a help by the way?

Let us neither despise, nor overvalue the world. While we bless God for its comforts, let us pray him to keep us from its snares.

*

The Christian is not ruined by living in the world, which he must needs do while he remains in it, but by allowing the world to live in him.

If this pilgrimage were all the way a way of ease and comfort, then we should not much desire to hasten on in it, or to come to the end of it, or to see God in heaven. Satisfied with the sweetness of the streams, we should stay away from the fountain.—G. B. CHEEVER.

Girt with the love of God on every side,
Breathing that love as heaven's own healing air,
I work or wait, still following my guide,
Braving each foe, escaping every snare.
Pressing still onward in the narrow way,
That leads, where Jesus led, to endless day.

Pray without ceasing.—1 THESS. v. 17.

NOT only do I have stated times for prayer, and a closet in which to utter it, but do I also at all times cherish the spirit of prayer? In the intervals of business, or labor, or study, do my thoughts go up in silent supplication? As I walk by the way, or in the watches of midnight, do I love to hold communion of thought and prayer with God? Do I pray as instinctively as I breathe? Do I expect never to cease praying, till I reach that blessed world where prayer is lost in praise?

The promise of God is not to the act, but to the habit of prayer.—PAYSON.

Prayer requires more of the heart than of the tongue; of sighs than of words; of faith than of discourse. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of the desire; in the simplicity of faith; and in the earnestness and perseverance of love. Our trust and confidence ought to proceed from that which God is able to do in us, not from what we can say to God.—QUESNEL.

Never shrink, and never fear;
Humbly, boldly, persevere;
“Always pray and never faint,”
Is his word to every saint.
Trust the word that cannot fail;
Urge the plea that must prevail;
And you joyfully shall prove,
All his boundless wealth of love.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.—JOHN xvii. 21.

DO I seek to cultivate that spirit of Christian unity which Christ enjoined on his disciples, and which was so exemplified in his own life? Do I realize that all Christians are one in their desires and prayers, though differing in modes of expression; that they have the same spirit of adoption, and are children of the same Father? Do I not only study the lesson of charity, and tolerance, and forbearance, but do I also seek to be one with my fellow-Christians in love to God, and love to all around me?

If Christians lived nearer to God, they would have no difficulty in loving one another.—J. HAMILTON.

None are so easily acquainted, so closely knit together, and so much endeared to each other, as real Christians. They are children of the same Father, brothers of the same Son, habitations of the same Spirit; fellow-citizens, fellow-servants, fellow-soldiers, fellow-travelers, fellow-heirs. How should they love each other!—J. MASON.

Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds,
Is like to that above.
Before our Father's throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one,
Our comforts, and our cares.

—J. FAWCETT.

He that watereth, shall be watered also himself.—
PROV. xi. 25.

DO I realize that I am but a steward of God; and that as such, I am to use my time, talents, influence, property—everything, for him? And can I better act as a faithful steward, than by aiding others in all reasonable ways; by scattering blessings with a free and bounteous hand; by words of sympathy, and instruction, and comfort; and giving systematically, and liberally, to the great objects of benevolence? In thus seeking to bless others, shall I not myself be richly blest?

The more you are like God, the happier you will be; and God receives not, but gives. Why should I not give a few crumbs to my Saviour, who daily supplies my table, and gives me all things richly to enjoy? Would I receive more from him? Then let me give more.—MULLER.

As the moon doth show her light to the world which she receiveth from the sun, so we ought to bestow the benefits received from God to the profit of our neighbor.—CAWDREY.

God's love to us has wealth upheaped;
Only by giving, is it reaped.
The heart will wither, and the mind,
If pent in by a selfish rind.
Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give self,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself.
Who gives not is not living;
We only live by giving.
The more we give, the more we live.

I sleep, but my heart waketh.—SOL. SONG v. 2.

DO I watch against everything like spiritual coldness, knowing that if allowed at all, it will soon gain ground, to the exclusion of growth in godliness? If, at times, I am tempted to neglect duty, or to allow a desire for ease and self-indulgence, do I prayerfully strive against it? Even if spiritual torpor should steal over me, do I not find that my heart is awake, and that my conscience still speaks, showing that Christ is still calling me to be up and doing, and to be active in his service?

We must be diligent, devoted, earnest in our Master's service, if we would be kept from being cold, and lifeless, and useless. We should be too active to stagnate; too busy to freeze. There is work enough always to be done; and the injunction is, that we do with our might what our hands find to do.

*

None shall be saved by Christ, but those only who work out their own salvation while God is working in them. We cannot do without God; and he will not do without us.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Settle it in your heart, that it is the sum of all your business and blessedness, to live to God.—J. WESLEY.

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my soul with joy:
That silent, earnest thought shall be,
That all my joys be found in thee,
And all my hopes shall rest on thee,
On thee, my God, on thee!

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—LUKE xii. 32.

IS it not a blessed and most cheering thought, that Christ knows every one of his disciples; and that he has declared they shall never perish, and none shall pluck them out of his hand? Am I one to whom this promise is given; one of the little flock to whom he will give the kingdom? Do I rejoice in belonging to it? Do I endeavor to bring others into it? Do I thankfully follow its divine Shepherd wherever he may lead me, hearkening to his voice, and keeping near to him?

It is a little flock, a fearful flock, but a most beloved flock, and one to whom a kingdom is promised.

—MACDUFF.

No grace, not even the most sparkling and shining, can bring us to heaven without perseverance in following Christ: not faith, if it be faint and frail; nor love, if it decline and wax cold; nor humility, if it continue not to the end; not obedience, not repentance, not patience, no, nor any other grace, except they have their perfect work. It is not enough to begin well, unless we end well.—T. BROOKS.

While through this wilderness we roam,
How sweet to think we're going home!
To know our trials soon shall cease,
And all our woes be hushed to peace.

Home, sweet home!
Oh, for the land of rest above!
Our own eternal home!

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.—Ps. lxvi. 18.

DO I remember, at all times, that God looketh on the heart; and that if sin is cherished there, it is a fatal hindrance to the efficacy of prayer, as well as to a favorable hearing by him? Is there any heart-sin to which I consciously allow a dwelling-place within, whether of intent, or feeling, or purpose? Do I pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten me; and do I search the Scriptures that I may be enlightened, so as to find out and part with all sin?

Sin is that which interposeth itself between the soul, and the light of God's countenance. But whether it be a slender mist, or a thick cloud, an infirmity or a rebellion, an omission or a commission, the Sun of righteousness, as eyed by faith, can and will disperse it, so as to make it vanish.—ARROWSMITH.

As the plaster cannot heal the wound while the arrow is sticking in it, so prayer will not profit him who regards iniquity in his heart.—CAWDREY.

Behold me, Lord, and if thou find
A root of bitterness within,
Though were the wealth of worlds resigned,
Oh, cleanse me from my secret sin.
Then dwell with me a constant guest;
And let me find in thee my rest!

I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.—Ps. cxix. 32.

DO I bear in mind that the Christian life is a race; and the way in which we are to run, is the way of God's commandments? Do I endeavor to keep the end in view, and to press on earnestly toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Is it my earnest desire, not only to walk, but to run with diligence the race set before me, looking unto Jesus, as both the Author and Finisher of the faith? Do I run with sincerity of heart, with earnestness of purpose, with speed of progress, with vigor of pursuit?

Always add; always run; always proceed. Neither stand still, nor go back, nor deviate. He that standeth still, proceedeth not; he that goeth back, continueth not; he that deviateth, revolveth; he goeth better that even creepeth in his way, than he that moveth out of his way.—AUGUSTINE.

The following of the soul after Christ is the effect of his grace. We never should run after him, if he did not draw us. But when he, by his word and his Spirit, draws us, then we shall run after him.

Bought with thy service and thy blood,
We doubly, Lord, are thine;
To thee our lives we would devote;
To thee our death resign.
Thy covenant, through our changing days,
Shall be our strength and stay;
Shall cheer our pathway to the tomb,
And guide to endless day.—DODDRIDGE.

Endure afflictions.—2 TIM. iv. 5.

DO I bear patiently the afflictions and trials that God, in his providence, may send me? Or do I allow myself to become discouraged, and impatient under them? Do I call to mind the patient endurance of Christ under all his sufferings? And does the thought of his example sustain and encourage me, when otherwise flesh and heart might fail? If he was made perfect through suffering, can his followers expect to go and meet him but by the road that he trod?

Though the word and the Spirit do the main work, yet suffering so unbolts the door of the heart, that both the word and the Spirit have easier entrance.—
BAXTER.

We are as sure of trouble in this world, as of waves on the sea; but while the waves toss and roll, they bear us on to the haven.—LYNCH.

If God dries up the water in the lake, it is to lead you to the unfailing fountain. If he sends the cross, it is to sweeten the crown. For no cross, no crown; no rain, no rainbow.—NOTTIDGE.

Oft by the sharpest, roughest ways,
Thou leadest on to happiness;
And who to thee doth consecrate his days,
Trouble shall meet him but to bless.
The end thereof shall clear and glorious be,
Though the dull heart fail how, or now, to see.

—WARNER.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—MATT. vi. 33.

IS it my earnest endeavor to keep the things of this world in subordination to the interests of my undying soul? To what purpose am I living? What end am I striving to attain? Do I realize that unless I make God's service the first and great thing, I cannot enter his kingdom? If ever discouraged with strivings after heavenly things, let me not forget that God accepts, and will help all who sincerely seek him.

Build your nest on no tree here; for God hath sold the forest to Death, and every tree on which we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end that we may flee, and mount up, and build upon the Rock.—RUTH-ERFORD.

It does not require great learning to be a Christian—to be convinced of the truth of the Bible, and to be conformed to its requirements. It requires only an honest heart and a willingness to obey God.—A. BARNES.

Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.
'Tis God's all-animating voice,
That calls thee from on high;
'Tis his own hand presents the prize,
To thine aspiring eye!—DODDRIDGE.

Looking unto Jesus.—HEB. xii. 2.

DO I look to Jesus as the only ground of my hope for time and eternity? As my wisdom, to enlighten; my righteousness, to justify; my sanctification, that I may be holy; my complete, and full, and everlasting redemption? Do I look to him as my example? Do I look to him not only for acceptance, but for encouragement, assistance, support and guidance, in all my duties, conflicts and sufferings? Is he all in all to me?

Like the bitten Israelite, look and live. For one look at self, take ten looks at Christ. Look at self only to see your need, and to Christ to find the remedy, the supply, the fullness. The least sight of Christ is saving; the least touch of Christ is healing. Constant looking is constant life.

When the heart grows weary, look to Jesus and consider him. Faith and meditation will fetch in fresh supplies of strength, comfort and courage. For he has assured us that if we suffer with him, we also shall reign with him; and this hope will be our helmet.—
M. HENRY.

Nearer, ever nearer.

Christ, we draw to thee;

Deep in adoration,

Bending low the knee:

All we have to offer,

All we hope to be,

Body, soul and spirit,

All we yield to thee!—THWING.

Every day will I bless thee.—Ps. cxlv. 2.

EVERY day do I feel my dependence on God? Every day do I cherish the spirit of thankfulness for his many mercies? While his kind and watchful providence provides for all my wants, does my heart go forth in constant gratitude to him? Do I trace all my blessings to his hand; associate them all with his love; let them all lead me nearer and nearer to him?

When I consider, great God, my dependence on thy providence, and that thy numberless mercies have been so little acknowledged and improved, I am justly afraid lest my unthankfulness should provoke thee to withhold thy blessings. Pardon me, O God, that I have so little observed, admired, and acknowledged thy wonderful goodness, and give me grace hereafter to observe and value thy kindness as becomes one who has received so much more than he deserves. And may thy manifold blessings fix such lasting impressions on my soul, that I shall always praise thee faithfully on earth, and at last for ever in heaven.—BISHOP WILSON.

Every morning, Lord, my cry
Shall to thee ascend on high;
Every night my praises show,
What to thy great love I owe.
Blessings fresh each morn appear;
Thanks each morning light shall hear.
Mercies new each day supplies;
Praises new each night shall rise.
Thus shall life one paean be,
Pouring thankfulness to thee!

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?—Ps. xlii. 5.

IS my soul cast down because of temptation? But has not God said that he will not suffer me to be tempted beyond what I am able to bear? Is affliction piercing my heart, or trouble pressing me down to the ground? But does not my heavenly Father know and regulate it all? And has he not promised that all things shall work together for my good if I love and trust him? However dark the cloud, is not the bow of mercy and promise upon it?

There is a dark and also a bright side to every providence, as there was to the fiery, cloudy pillar that guided God's people of old in the desert. Nature looks upon the dark side, and calls it sorrow and sadness; but faith sees the sun dispersing the darkness, and calls it by the name of joy.—H. BONAR.

Never give way to sadness. Put on your hat, and go and visit the poor and sick in your neighborhood. Seek out the desolate and distressed; inquire into their wants, and sympathize with, and minister to them. I have often tried it, and have always found it the best medicine for a heavy heart.—JOHN HOWARD.

Oh, why art thou cast down, my soul?

Uplift thee, and be strong;
Thy care upon the Maker roll,

Thy sadness doth him wrong.
The God who ever rules above,
His child doth know, and keep and love!

—OBERLIN.

All things are of God.—2 COR. v. 18.

AM I in the constant habit of tracing all things to God? Do I recognize his providence in all events; seek his guidance in every duty; see his hand in every joy; and acknowledge it in every sorrow? Does it make trouble easier to bear that it comes from him? Is joy sweeter because he sends, and duty because he commands it? In all my ways do I so acknowledge him, that I can claim the promise, that he will direct my steps?

By him are all things, and in him do all things consist. Every object in nature is impressed with his footsteps, and every day repeats the wonders of creation. There is not an object, be it pebble or pearl, weed or rose, the flower-spangled sward beneath, or the star-spangled sky above, not a worm or an angel, a drop of water or a boundless ocean, in which intelligence may not discern, and piety adore, the providence of him who took our nature that he might save our souls.—GUTHRIE.

Though to-day may not fulfill
All thy hopes, have patience still;
For perchance to-morrow's sun
Sees the happier days begun;
As God willeth, march the hours,
Bringing joy, at last, in showers,
When whate'er we ask is ours.

—LYRA GERMANICA.

Unto you which believe he is precious.—1 PET. ii. 7.

HAVE I a living faith in Christ, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour? Is he the foundation of all my hopes for time and eternity? Does my soul go forth to him in gratitude and love? Is he indeed precious to me—precious in the excellence of his nature, in the greatness of his office, in the infinite value of his work? Do I show my love to him by cherishing his Spirit, and keeping his commandments?

The Lord takes up none but the forsaken; makes none healthy but the sick; gives sight to none but the blind; makes none alive but the dead; sanctifies none but sinners; and to all these he is precious.—LUTHER.

Christ is precious to all who believe; and in everything he is precious; and the more we know him, the more precious he becomes. His person, his blood, his promises, his sympathy, his love—they are all precious. His presence on earth is precious, but oh, what will it be in heaven!—J. SMITH.

Jesus, Saviour, all divine,
Hast thou made me truly thine?
Hast thou bought me with thy blood?
Reconciled my heart to God?
Hearken to my earnest prayer,
Let me thine own image bear;
Let me love thee more and more,
Till I reach the heavenly shore.—HASTINGS.

Ye are complete in him.—COL. ii. 10.

D^O I rely entirely on the perfect atonement and finished work of Christ, as the only ground of my hope? Through faith in him am I completely justified; and through his truth and providence, and by the power of his Spirit, do I expect to be completely sanctified, so as at last, through grace, to be fitted for heaven, as through his promise I am entitled to it? Am I thankfully content to receive all from him—to take him for my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption?

God offers you the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness that will cover all your sins, and meet all your wants. You may have it without money and without price. Take God's word for it, and thankfully accept the gift.—PAYSON.

What can we wish that is not found in God? Would we have large possessions? He is immensity. Would we have long continuance? He is eternity itself. Would we be perfectly and for ever satisfied? We shall be, when we awake in his likeness.—ARROWSMITH.

He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free.
If any be but weak, how strong is he!
To dead men, life he is; to sick men, health;
To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth;
A pleasure without loss a treasure without stealth.

—GILES FLETCHER

Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.—JOHN xiv. 6.

DO I intelligently and sincerely take Christ as my Way—the only way to pardon, to holiness, to duty, to heaven? Do I receive him as the Truth, as opposed to all falsehood and error; and his doctrine as the only true doctrine, desiring no other truth than the truth as it is in Jesus? And do I take him as the Life; the life of my soul; its beginning, middle and end? Am I so one with him, that for me to live is Christ?

Beside Christ there is no way but wandering; no truth, but error and hypocrisy; no life, but spiritual and eternal death.—LUTHER.

Little as I know of Christ (and it is my sin and shame that I know so little) I would not exchange the learning of one hour's fellowship with him for all the learning of ten thousand universities during ten thousand ages, even though angels were to be my teachers.
—JOHN BROWN.

O Lord, be thou to me “the Way;”
To me be thou “the Truth;”
To me, my Saviour, be “the Life;”
To age from earliest youth!
So shall that Way be my delight,
That Truth shall make me free,
That Life shall raise me from the dead,
That I may live to thee!

—LEIGH RICHMOND.

Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.—MIC. ii. 10.

DO I realize that this world is polluted through sin, and endeavor so to live as to keep myself unspotted from its influence? Do I watch against its corruptions? Is my heart—are my hopes—are my treasures in heaven? Or do I seek my happiness and rest in the things of time and sense? Do I look upon the world, and live in it, as if it were to be permanently my abiding place? Or do I regard it, as it was designed to be, but as a mere passway to a home eternal in the heavens?

Do not look downward, Christian; your home is above; your Father above: your Saviour above; your dearest friends, the companions you love, and the righteous nation to which you belong—all are above. Look not down, then; but lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh.—CHAMPNEYS.

If we live with God here below, we shall live with him above. If we make the world a field of labor for God, and a sphere of usefulness to men, we shall not be in danger from its allurements and temptations. If our hearts on earth are filled with the spirit of heaven, we soon shall enter there.—W. JAY.

Fond earth! proportion not my seeming love
To my long stay. Let not my thoughts deceive me.
Thou art my prison, and my home's above;
My life's a preparation but to leave thee.
Like one that seeks a door, I walk about thee.
With thee I cannot live; I cannot live without thee!

—QUARLES

They are without fault before the throne of God.—
REV. xiv. 5.

IS not this a most glorious prospect and portion for the believer? Am I looking forward to it as my own? And am I living a life of preparation for the blessedness thus promised to the faithful? Do I so trust in Christ, and so live a life of conformity to his will, as through grace to be fitted for heaven, as through the divine mercy and promise I may have a title to it? Does the expectation of coming glory encourage me to be faithful unto death?

Here is the heir, yonder the inheritance; here the toil, there the rest; here the candidate, there the reward; here the faithful unto death, there the crown of everlasting life. In proportion as we grow in excellency, so as not to be barren or unfruitful in God's service, so shall an entrance be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.—J. HAMILTON.

I shine in the light of God;
His likeness adorns my brow
Through the valley of death my feet have trod,
And I reign in glory now!
I am one of the angel band,
To my head a crown is given;
And a harp of praise is in my hand;
I have found the joy of heaven!

Who also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.—LUKE x. 39.

WITH a docile and childlike spirit, do I sit at the feet of Jesus, always desiring to be taught by him? Have I given myself up to his guidance, in duty here, and to heaven hereafter? Have I chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from me? Do I guard against the influence of the world, and self, and sin, that I may not be led away from the Saviour? Do I earnestly pray for more of his Spirit? Am I humble, teachable, prayerful, faithful to live near to him?

Our sitting at Christ's feet when we hear his word, signifies a readiness to receive his teachings, and the entire resignation of ourselves to the guidance of them. We must either sit at his feet, or be made his footstool. But if we sit with him at his feet now, we shall sit with him on his throne shortly.—MATTHEW HENRY.

By these things examine yourselves. By whose rules am I acting; in whose strength; in whose name; for whose glory? What faith, humility, self-denial, and love of God, and Christ, has there been in all my actions?—J. MASON.

In suffering, be thy love my peace;
In weakness, be thy love my power;
And when the storms of life shall cease,
 Jesus, in that momentous hour,
In death, as life, be thou my guide,
And save me, who for me hast died!

Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.—ROM. xii. 2.

DO I endeavor, as commanded, to come out from the world and be separate from its evil, that God may receive me as one of his sons or daughters? Do I watch against its wrong principles, its false maxims, its foolish fashions, its sinful pleasures and allurements? Do I so enthrone God in my heart, that I have no desire for the portion which the world offers? Do I watch against the first beginnings of evil, going at once to God for help, lest the thought of sin may lead to its commission? Is God in all my thoughts?

If thou art eager for the world, thy hope is either false, or at best very feeble.—BISHOP JEWELL.

The world has its pleasures, and they are many, and for the time seem to satisfy, but they are unsubstantial and transitory, and they leave a sting behind. We are hungry, and it offers us bread; but it is poisoned bread. We are thirsty, and it offers us drink; but it is from deadly fountains. It may satisfy for the moment; but there is death in it at the end. Only the Bread of life, and the water of salvation, can satisfy and for ever fill the soul.

*

Unclasp, O man, the siren hand of pleasure,
Shun the world's sins; let her gay follies go;
A few swift years will bring the unwelcome ending;
Then leaving earth, ah! whither dost thou go?
Is it to endless joy, or endless woe?

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—MATT. xxviii. 20.

DO I realize that Christ is always present with his people, both by his omnipresence and by his Spirit? Does the consciousness of this ever-abiding presence, give me rest and peace? Do I rejoice that God knows all my thoughts and feelings, and that nothing can happen to me without his knowledge, and his providence? If, at times, his presence seems veiled from me, do I remember that he is still with me? And are my faith and hope still fixed on him?

One of the most important and difficult things to realize, is, that God is really with us, watching the working of every human sympathy, with the anxious interest of a father, and ever willing to direct and help.—GORDON.

The thought that Christ is always with us, to cheer and help, should not engender sloth, or a lack of watchfulness; but rather quicken us to renewed diligence in his service, for we work beneath his eye; and should lead to a more careful watchfulness, lest we do anything to grieve his loving heart.—J. MASON.

O Tower of strength, Redeemer, Friend,
Defend us by thy power;
And till we reach our journey's end,
Uphold us every hour.
Each step we venture in advance,
Is still by paths unknown;
But we are safe at every stage,
If guarded from thy throne!

If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.—1 JOHN v. 14.

DO I see and feel the full force of the word “anything” in this promise; and that nothing is so trivial, or of so little moment, that I may not bring it to God in prayer? Do I, in all my petitions, cheerfully submit my will and desires, to his most holy and wise will? Do I pray with confidence, knowing that as God has promised, he will hear and answer the petitions of his children? If an answer is not at once granted, do I with patience and faith wait for it?

Every accepted prayer, is not immediately an answered prayer.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Never was a faithful prayer lost. Some have a longer voyage than others, but they come back with richer lading.—GURNALL.

Does it not show the fullness of Christ that he graciously promises to hear, to the utmost, all the petitions of his people? As nature contains a fullness to give us all that we need for this life, so Christ has a fullness for all that we need for the soul.—J. BATE.

Go to him with all your needs.
No believer vainly pleads,
Who before the Saviour's throne,
Makes his wants and weakness known.
Ere your trembling lips can speak,
Jesus knows the boon you seek;
All that you would fain receive,
Readier far is he to give.—HOLR.

Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.—ISA. xxxii. 20.

AS the field is the world, am I sowing precious seed in it, hoping, through the divine blessing, for a harvest of good? Do I seek for occasions to speak for Christ? Does my example speak? Does my light continually shine? If at times discouraged, do I remember the promise, that "he that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"? Do I endeavor "not to be weary in well-doing," knowing that "in due season I shall reap if I faint not"?

There are tears which are themselves the seed we must sow; tears of sorrow for sin—our own, and that of others; and tears of tenderness in prayer.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Let us be an example of godliness; a light to them who are in darkness. Let not the name of God be evil spoken of through us: his name is holy.—BISHOP JEWELL.

Sow with a generous hand;
Pause not for toil or pain;
Weary not in the summer's heat,
Nor through the cold spring rain;
But patiently wait till the autumn comes,
For the sheaves of golden grain.
Sow, and by faith look upward,
Where the starry light appears;
For in joy you shall reap the harvest,
You have sown to-day in tears.

—A. PROCTER.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—ECCLES. xii. 14.

AM I living, habitually, with both worlds in view, endeavoring to serve God faithfully, here, in all the duties of life, and so to be prepared to give up my account to him with joy and not with grief? Repenting of sin, have I come by faith to Christ, so that I can now look to him as my Saviour, as well as judge? Do I, in all things, remember my stewardship? My time, talents, influence, wealth, all that I have and am, do I regard as belonging to God, and to be faithfully used for him?

In the day of final judgment, every one of us must answer for himself. No one then can assume our guilt, or bear our responsibilities. The divine charge to each one of us, is "occupy till I come." Whether God has given us one, or five, or ten talents, the call will soon be heard, "give an account of thy stewardship." We should strive so to live, that we may not then hear the fearful addition, "Thou mayest no longer be steward!"

*

Time was; is past; thou canst not it recall.
Time is; thou hast it; wisely use it all.
Time future, is not: it may never be.
Time present, is the only time for thee.
Improve it well; the judgment hastens on;
Soon must thou give account for all things done!

Because I live, ye shall live also.—JOHN xiv 19.

DO I realize that my Saviour is still living; and that from his home in heaven, he watches, with the most tender and loving interest, for the welfare and comfort of his children? Do I feel that my life, as a Christian, is bound up with his life; that nothing shall separate me from his love; that as I live in him here, so I shall live with him for ever hereafter? Does this blessed assurance lead me to live for him now, and to look forward, with joyous hope, to endless union with him in heaven?

Christ is that to the Christian, which his home is to the weary traveler; it is his dwelling-place, the stay, the solace, the joy and centre and rest of his spirit; and hence he is constantly anticipating his arrival at home.—ROBERT HALL.

Believer! this promise of Jesus is thy title-deed to heaven. His life is the guarantee of thine own. With him for your life, how inviolate your security! Satan must first pluck the crown from that glorified head, ere he can touch one jewel in the crown of his people.

—MACDUFF.

Oh, heaven is nearer than ever we think,
As we look, with a trembling dread,
At the misty future that stretches on,
From the silent home of the dead.
For the eye of the Christian that shuts in death,
Will open at once in bliss;
And the welcome will sound in the heavenly world,
Ere the farewell is hushed in this!—ROBINSON

Vain man would be wise.—JOB xi. 12.

DO I see and avoid the vanity and folly of striving to comprehend what is inscrutable to mere finite wisdom, leaving to eternity to make plain, what now I may not understand? Do I look away from the mysteries of providence, and the dark things of this world, to the simple teachings of divine truth, and the plain requirements of commanded duty? Casting aside all high and self-exalting thoughts, am I willing, as a little child, to be taught of God? Do I remember that God is infinite, and I am finite? Do I seek, as the great thing, to be made wise unto salvation?

Pry not too curiously into the secrets of divine providence, nor suffer your shallow reason arrogantly to judge and censure its designs.—FLAVEL.

Every particle of matter is an immensity; every leaf, a world; every insect an inexplicable compendium. How, then, can we comprehend all the mysteries of truth, and all the ways of the infinite God?
—LAVATER.

Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never failing skill,
God treasures up his wise designs,
And works his sovereign will.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.—COWPER

I am crucified with Christ.—GAL. ii. 20.

HAVE I, through the cross, been crucified to the power of sin, so that I am dead to self and the world, but alive unto God? Though living, to outward appearance, as others live, am I influenced by higher motives, and actuated by a nobler principle of action, even faith in Christ as my Saviour? Does this lead me while living in the flesh, yet not to live after the flesh, but as a faithful follower of a divine Master? With Paul, can I say, “For me to live, is Christ”?

A Christian is the highest style of man.—YOUNG.

Christianity is being like-minded with Christ; considering him our sanctification as well as our redemption. It is endeavoring to live to him here, that we may live with him hereafter.—H. MORE.

There are those who hear or speak of being crucified with Christ, who yet do not examine if their sins are crucified, and their evil passions mortified. Gladly would they have their end like that of the Christian, but not their way. They would be saints in heaven, but not on earth.—FLAVEL.

Oh crucify this self, that :

No more, but Christ in me, may live;
Bid all my vile affections die,
Nor let one hateful sin survive.
In all things nothing may I see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but thee!

This do in remembrance of me.—LUKE xxii. 19.

WITH what feelings do I come to the Lord's table? Is it as a contrite, humble sinner, having no merit or strength of my own, but resting on Christ, by faith, for pardon, acceptance, strength for duty, and final salvation? Do I come with devout gratitude for all that Christ has done and promised, consecrating myself afresh to him, and asking his presence, and guidance, and comfort, in all the events of life? As he has died for me, do I here form fresh purposes of living for him?

The holy communion was appointed to be observed in remembrance of Christ; to keep fresh in our minds his dying for us, as well as to remind us of an absent friend, even Christ, interceding for us, in virtue of his death, at God's right hand.—MATTHEW HENRY.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has a threefold aspect. It is a privilege to be enjoyed; a duty to be performed; and a means of grace to the Christian, to encourage and strengthen him in the divine life. In it Christ graciously meets his children, and gives them a foretaste of endless communion with him in heaven.

*

Heavenward ever bound I haste,
When thy table, Lord, is spread;
Heavenly strength on earth I taste,
Feeding on the living bread.
Life, and light, and joy combined,
In the Saviour here I find.

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.—ROM. viii. 28.

DOES the love of God so reign within me, that all his providences are working out my spiritual good? Do I see the hand of God in them all? If joyous, do they lead me, in devout thankfulness, to him? Or if trying and grievous, do they bring me in humility and childlike submission to his feet, with the feeling that he knows what is best, and is ordering all in infinite wisdom and love, and that what I know not now, I shall know hereafter?

If we see or feel sorrow, let us not be depressed; for the end of his counsel and working lieth hidden and underneath the ground; but as seed it shall spring up and bear a harvest of joy and blessedness to all that love God.

*

Either directly or indirectly, every providence has a tendency to the spiritual good of those who love God; breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to the Saviour, weaning them from the world, and fitting them for heaven.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Go, then, earthly fame and pleasure;
 Come disaster, scorn, and pain!
 In thy service pain is pleasure;
 With thy favor loss is gain!
 I have called thee Abba, Father!
 I have stayed my heart on thee!
 Storms may howl, and clouds may gather,
 All must work for good to me!—H. F. LYTE.

Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.—Ps. xcvi. 11.

WHEN trials and troubles gather in darkness on my path, do I remember that light is sown for me by my heavenly Father, and the seed will, in due time, spring up and bear the fruit of joy and gladness for my soul? Is this a comfort in the darkest hour of life? Though the clouds may gather and thicken, do I remember that the Sun of righteousness is behind them, and that they will soon break away, and its light and warmth cheer my heart?

Light is sown in the vale of fogs. Though often hidden for a time, seed-like, under the dark clouds of sorrow, it is only taking root in the chastened heart, and will soon appear, and bring forth the flowers to bloom, and the fruit to ripen in the garden of God.

Nothing doth so establish the mind amid the rolling and turbulency of present things as to look above and beyond them; above, to the steady and loving Hand by which they are ruled; and beyond them, to the light that is shining behind the clouds, and to the blessed home to which that divine Hand is leading us.

Lord, we sit and cry to thee,
Like the blind beside the way;
Make our darkened souls to see,
Brightness of thy perfect day!
Lord, rebuke our sullen night;
Give thyself unto our sight!
Then thy joy our souls shall fill,
As we haste to do thy will!

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Ps. li. 17.

DO I remember that all sincere repentance must begin in the heart, and be manifest in the life in humility, and in true sorrow for sin? Is my heart broken, not in despair, but in deep humiliation for my sins as committed against a holy and loving God? Am I softened under the word of God, and the power of his Holy Spirit; filled with the spirit of obedience to the divine will; brought back, in penitence and faith, to love and serve him?

It is the crushed olive that yields the oil; the pressed grape, that gives forth the wine; and it was the smitten rock that gave the people water. So it is the broken, contrite heart, that is most rich in holiness, and most fragrant in grace.

The bruised reed is an expressive emblem of the soul broken and contrite on account of sin, and weeping and mourning for transgression. Christ will not break it, that is, he will not be unforgiving and cruel. He will heal it, pardon it, and give it strength.—

A. BARNES.

A broken heart, my God, my King,
Is all the sacrifice I bring.
The God of grace will ne'er despise,
A broken heart for sacrifice.
Thy holy joys, my God, restore,
And guard me that I fall no more!

—WATTS.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—MATT. v. 16.

DO I not only love the truth which God has revealed, but do I endeavor to live the life which his word enjoins? Thus do I seek not only to glorify God myself, but to lead others to do the same? Do I bear in mind that the proof of God's grace being in my heart, is its effect on my life; and that a holy example may influence, when calls of divine truth might otherwise be unheard or disregarded? Do I endeavor so to live that all may safely follow my example?

“Even miracles,” says Neander, “could not have given Christianity a firm hold on human nature, if it had not penetrated by its divine power, and thus shown itself to be that which alone can satisfy the higher necessities of man. This divine power of the gospel revealed itself to the heathen in the lives of Christians. The announcement of the gospel by the *life*, operated even more powerfully than its announcement by the *word*.”

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready at command ;
If you cannot, toward the needy,
Reach an ever-open hand ;
You can visit the afflicted ;
O'er the erring you can weep ;
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

—F. CROSBY.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—1 SAM. vii. 12.

WHEN I have prayed earnestly for the divine guidance and blessing, and prayer has been manifestly answered, am I equally earnest to acknowledge God's goodness, and to return the sacrifice of grateful praise to him? Am I on the watch to raise my Ebenezers? Do I, from the past, take fresh encouragement for the future? More and more do I feel my dependence, and rejoice to be led, in all things, by the divine Hand?

Real faith is as satisfied, and rests as firmly on the abiding promises of Jehovah, as if it had all the blessings of grace and glory in hand.—TOPLADY.

They who make the glory of God their end, and the word of God their rule; the Spirit of God the guide of their affections, and the providence of God the guide of their affairs, may be confident that the Lord goes before them, as truly as he went before Israel in the wilderness, though not as sensibly.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Come, rouse thee, faint one, 'tis not well
Thus darkly on life's cares to dwell.
As brooks and torrents, rivers, all
Increase the gulf in which they fall,
Such thoughts, by gathering up the rills
Of lesser griefs, spread real ills;
And with their gloomy shades conceal,
The landmarks hope would else reveal.

—DINNIE.

The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.—LUKE xix. 10.

DO I realize the wondrous truth, that the blessed Saviour left heaven to seek and save, on earth, those who not only did not seek him, but who were at enmity to him? Do I feel that I was one of those lost ones; and do I thankfully acknowledge the power of Christ to save, and for ever bless his name that I trust he has saved me? Do I endeavor to lead others to him, and to extend the knowledge of his salvation to the ends of the earth? —

Though all around may frown on the vilest sinner, and an accusing conscience within may condemn him, yet the gospel of Christ invites him to return to God against whom he has sinned, offering him free forgiveness and eternal life, if he will but come and receive them.

What a marvelous salvation is this! Christ takes a worm of the dust, and transforms it into an angel; a black and deformed thing, and makes it clean and matchless in glory, peerless in beauty, and fit to be the companion of seraphs! Oh, my soul, stand and admire this blessed truth of salvation by Christ.—
SPURGEON.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,

O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,

O Lamb of God, I come!

—C. ELLIOTT.

Whoso keepeth his mouth and tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles.—PROV. xxi. 23.

DO I bear in mind how often the tongue is spoken of in the Bible, and how strongly the right use of it is impressed on all? Do I realize what thoughtfulness, prudence, sound judgment, and kind feeling are requisite, if I would avoid speaking for evil, and always speak for good? Is it my earnest prayer, that God would enable me to keep the door of my lips? Do I always endeavor to speak in the fear of God, and in love to man?

Give not thy tongue too great liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken, is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in the hand of another. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—QUARLES.

By examining the tongue of a patient, physicians find out the disease of the body; and philosophers, diseases of the mind and heart.—JUSTIN.

Beware the tongue that's set on fire of hell,
And flames in slander, falsehood, or deceit;
In malice, idle talking, thoughtless tales.
Speak not too much; nor without thought; be true
In all things. He that in word offends not,
God hath declared a perfect man; while he
That bridles not his tongue, deceives himself,
And shows his faith is vain! *



Though it tarry, wait for it.—HAB. ii. 3.

WHEN I have been praying to God, asking his guidance, or support, do I, like the Psalmist, look up in hopeful expectation that he will answer my prayer, though it may not be in the way that to me might seem best? Do I realize that he has an appointed time for his work; and that he will do it when that time comes? Do I patiently wait for his answer? And do I feel sure, because he has promised, that though the answer may tarry, it will come?

The answer to prayer may be delayed. Your supplications may seem to be kept long on the wing, hovering around the mercy-seat. God sometimes sees fit thus to test the faith and patience of his children. But the answer will come at last; and it shall be plain.

When our blessed Lord, in his agony, prayed more earnestly, lo! an angel descended from heaven, to strengthen him. And we may assure ourselves, that whosoever we pray according to his will, we shall be answered and strengthened according to his promise.

—ARNDT.

There is a time to wait;
Let us that time abide;
God's hand of love will bless, though late,
Those who in him confide.
His promise stands for ever sure.
His love and faithfulness endure.

Behold I lay in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.—1 PET. ii. 6.

DO I regard Christ Jesus as the chief corner-stone of the Church on earth—the only sure foundation of all my hopes for time and eternity? Do I look to him, as the refuge and support of all his people; their strong rock, to which to cling when the blasts of unbelief, or the storms of sorrow assail? Do I rest solely on him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, looking to him, by faith, for all that I need for time and eternity? —

The believer's faith in Jesus, is his sure guarantee for all that he needs. As the tree must die, or the rock fall, before a dissolution can be effected between them, so the believer must lose his hold on the spiritual life, or the rock must crumble, ere the union can be dissolved.—J. BATE.

We are poor, but Christ is rich; we are dead, but he is life; we are sin, but he is righteousness; we are guilty, but he is grace; we are miserable, but he is mercy; we are lost, but he is salvation. He ever lives; ever loves; ever pities; ever pleads. He loves to the uttermost, and saves all who come to him.—J. MASON.

On thee, as on a sure foundation,
A sure tried corner-stone,
Lord, I will strive to raise
The tower of my salvation, and thy praise.
In thee, as in my glorious centre, shall
The lines of all my dearest longings fall.

—QUARLES.

Himself took our infirmities.—MATT. viii. 17.

IS it not an unspeakable comfort to feel that our divine Redeemer once knew, in his own experience, our troubles and sufferings; that he was not only in all points tempted like as we are, but that he was hungry, and thirsty, and weary, and heavy laden, and troubled in spirit, and very sorrowful? When troubles and trials oppress, do I realize that my Saviour who is in heaven, is the same Man of sorrows who suffered on earth, and that he knows our wants, and will grant us all we need if we will but come and ask it?

It is a glorious thought, that we have in heaven One we can think of, know, believe, love, delight in; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; one who can be and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; who died to make satisfaction, and lives to make intercession for us. We are on his shoulders, to have our burdens borne for us: we are near his heart, that he may both die and live for us.—NICHOL.

Touched with a sympathy divine,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same.
Then let our humble faith address,
His mercy and his power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
For every trying hour.—WATTS.

And now, little children, abide in him.—1 JOHN ii. 28.

DO I feel, constantly, my dependence on Christ, and endeavor to cherish the spirit of constant communion with him? Does my regard to his word, prove that I abide in it? Do I abide in his merit, as my righteousness; and in his Spirit, as my Sanctifier and Guide and Comforter? Do I realize that if I do not abide in the Saviour, my life will be fruitless, and my hopes unfounded? Is it my earnest prayer that Christ will always abide in me?

The Lord Jesus is the safe refuge of the soul in all the storms of life. He is the secret place of the Most High; and all who are in him, dwell under the shadow of the Almighty. Eternal safety and comfort are in him; and it is in vain for us to seek them anywhere else.—REES.

They that truly believe, have Christ in their hearts, heaven in their eye, and the world under their feet. God's Spirit is their guide; his fear, their guard; his people, their companions; his promises, their cordials; holiness is their way; and heaven is their home.—J. MASON.

Christian, this thy motto be,
Jesus says, "Abide with me."
Grace and strength from him receive;
As a branch in Jesus live.
Sanctified in him thou art;
Sanctify him in thy heart.

Trust in the Lord, and do good.—Ps. xxxvii. 5.

DO I keep to the order of the command here given; first trust in the Lord, and then, as his servant, do good? Do I do good to my own soul by endeavoring to know, and love, and live for God, to please him and be pleased in him? Do I endeavor to do good to others, by seeking to win them to the Saviour, and by doing all in my power for their welfare and happiness? Do I sympathize with others, and do to them as I would have them do to me? Do I so live as to commend religion to all, as not only the way of safety, but of happiness for both worlds?

To rejoice in the happiness of others, is to make it our own; to produce it, is to make it more than our own.—J. A. JAMES.

We must not think to trust God, and then live as we list. It is not trusting but tempting him if we do not make conscience of our duty to him. Nor must we think to do good, and then trust to ourselves, and to our own righteousness and strength. We must trust in the Lord, and do good.—MATTHEW HENRY.

That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.
But he that marks, from day to day,
In generous acts, his radiant way,
Treads the same path his Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—MATT. xvi. 24.

DO I thus follow Christ, like him taking up my daily cross, and bearing it patiently for his sake? Do I receive the truth he teaches; endeavor to do what he commands; and cherish the spirit he enjoins? Do I follow him fully, sincerely, with a ready heart, and a firm purpose; not halting at difficulties that may be in the way, but trusting to his power to make every way plain before me? Am I content to wait for my rest till the conflict is over?

The more we deny ourselves, the more shall we obtain from God.—HORACE.

We are not to make, or seek crosses for ourselves; but as God lays them in our path we are to take them up willingly, and bear them cheerfully, if we would be preparing for the crown. Where there are no crosses, there are few comforts; where no trials, few consolations and supports.

*

Tell me not of gain or loss,
 Ease, enjoyment, pomp, or power;
 Welcome poverty and cross,
 Shame, reproach, affliction's hour;
 "Follow me!" I know thy voice;
 Jesus, Lord, thy steps I see;
 Now I take thy yoke by choice;
 Light thy burden, now, to me!

—MONTGOMERY.



Let all bitterness and . . . evil speaking be put away from you.—EPH. iv. 31.

DO I ever indulge in uncandid or harsh judgments of others? And as flowing from, or leading to them, do I ever speak evil of others? Or if I do not speak, do I listen in silence, or with complacency, when others so speak, and thus give countenance to what they say? In thought as well as word, do I endeavor to keep my conscience free from the sin of judging others? Has charity, in the broadest sense, taken up her dwelling-place in my heart?

Those are the best Christians, who are more careful to reform themselves, than to censure others.—**FULLER.**

In judging ourselves, we cannot be too severe; in judging others, we cannot be too candid and charitable. We judge ourselves by our motives, but others by their actions.—**W. NEVINS.**

A judicious silence, is better than truth spoken without charity.—**DE SALES.**

What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone
 Around thy steps below!
What patient love was seen in all
 Thy life, and death of woe!
Oh, give us hearts to love like thee;
 Like thee, O Lord, to grieve
Far more for others' sins, than all
 The wrongs that we receive.

Search me, O God, and know my heart.—Ps. cxix. 23.

IS it my earnest desire to know myself, and to see my heart as God sees it? Do I pray that he will make known to me every wrong thought, and motive, and feeling, which might otherwise escape my notice, so that every day I may turn from sin, and gain fresh strength for pressing on in the divine life? While confessing my sinfulness in general, am I willing to know my particular and individual sins; and do I desire and seek to know them, that I may turn from them? Do I long for holiness of heart and life?

We must judge of our religion by examining its foundation, in Christ without, and in the heart within. If that be wrong and baseless, the superstructure is perishable and worthless.—FLAVER.

It is not so much the great sins that take the freshness from our conscience, as the numberless petty faults which we are all the while committing.

When sin lets us alone, we may let sin alone; but till then, we are to carry on the warfare against it, both without and within, till God shall at last give us the victory in heaven.

Search me, O Lord, and try the thoughts
That dwell within my heart;
Whate'er of sin may there be found,
Oh, bid it all depart.
Let thy good Spirit dwell with me,
And form my soul a house for thee.

*All these things have I kept, from my youth up.
What lack I yet?—MATT. xix. 20.*

DO I understand, and feel, that mere morality is not enough to save me; but that in penitence for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only way to heaven? Do I ask that God's Spirit will show me my inmost heart, and lead me to turn from everything that stands between my soul and the Saviour? Am I willing to renounce self-righteousness, and self-dependence, and to give up all that would keep me back from the cross, and from treading, with faithful zeal the narrow way that leads to heaven?

The great mistake of my life, said Gerrit Smith to his pastor, has been, that I have tried to be moral without faith in Christ. But I have now learned that true morality can only keep pace with trust in Christ as my Saviour. And Bishop Wilson well says, that though morality does not make a Christian, no one can be a Christian without morality. *

No more, my God, I boast no more,
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
And trust the merits of thy Son.
The best obedience of my hands,
Dares not appear before thy throne;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord hath done.

—WATTS.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.—Ps. xix. 7.

DO I realize that the word of God is for ever sure; that we may give full credit to all its teachings, and may rely upon it, knowing that it will never mislead or deceive us? Do I take it as the sure guide to all truth, and to all duty; to holiness here, and to heaven hereafter? Has it made me wise unto salvation? Do I commend it to all, as the source of their belief, and the guide of their conduct? Do I seek to extend the knowledge of it to all who are destitute?

The Rev. James W. Alexander, D. D., began his *Thirty-one Rules on How to Read the Bible* with, “In all your reading, bear in mind that it is the word of God;” and ended them with the weighty injunction, “In all your reading, remember that it is for the salvation of your soul.”

Other books may make men learned and wise unto ostentation; but only the Bible can make them learned and wise unto salvation.—ARROWSMITH.

Great Sun of righteousness, arise;
Bless the dark world with heavenly light!
Thy gospel makes the simple wise;
Thy laws are pure; thy judgments right.
Thy noblest wonders here we view,
In souls renewed, and sins forgiven.
Lord, cleanse my sins; my soul renew;
And make thy word my guide to heaven!

—WATTS.

Receive, with meekness, the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.—JAMES i. 21.

DO I come to God's word with freedom from prejudice and preconceived opinions, willing to be taught, and earnestly desiring to know just what God teaches and commands? Feeling my ignorance, do I come to it for instruction and guidance, believing it all to be profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that through grace I may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works? Do I assent to all its truths; consent to all its laws; and always receive it in a submissive, humble, teachable spirit?

If you come to God's word in the spirit he requires, you will give up many preconceived opinions and fondly cherished notions of your own, and unlearn much that you have hitherto learned. If you come with a childlike, humble, prayerful spirit, God will teach you with wisdom from above, and you will find his word a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path.

When the blessed volume I peruse,
And o'er its sacred pages muse,
Oh, then, thy precious word fulfill,
And while I seek to learn thy will,
Draw near, in answer to my prayer,
And, gracious Saviour, meet me there!

Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.—1 SAM. iii. 9.

O I listen to the voice of God, in his word, in his providence, by his Spirit, in all his dealings and dispensations? Do I follow the teachings of that voice, humbly and earnestly asking what the Lord would have me to think, and feel, and be, and do? Do I desire entire conformity to the divine will, and always to be filled with the divine Spirit? Do I endeavor to keep down self-will, and to bring it in all things into subjection to the will of God? From my heart, can I say, “Not my will, but thine be done”?

Religion, in its rise, interests us almost exclusively about ourselves. In its progress, it engages us about the welfare of our fellow-men. In its more advanced stages, it animates us to look to God’s will in all things, and to exalt, to the utmost, the honor and will of God.—C. SIMEON.

The highest and most acceptable service we can render to God, is to be willing either to do or suffer his will, as to him may seem best. The former we may share with angels and ransomed spirits. The latter is reserved for the saints on earth; and in it God manifests himself, with peculiar love and tenderness, to their souls.—LONGDEN.

Speak to my heart, and let no sage’s word,
No teacher thee beside, explain thy law.
Let every soul, before thy presence, Lord,
Bow down before thee, in deep, silent awe,
And let thy voice—thy voice alone, be heard!

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 PET. iii. 18.

AM I making progress in religion? Do I remember that where there is life, there is always growth; that there is no standing still in the divine life; and that if not going forward, I am going backward? Do I strive to be advancing; to attain to higher and still higher degrees of holiness; or am I satisfied with the progress already made? Am I forgetting the things behind, and continually pressing on to those before, to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?

As for the growth and health of the body there must be food, so if we would grow in grace, we must feed on the word of God. As the body must have air, to breathe, so we must live under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As the body must have exercise, so to be good, we must do good. As the body must avoid the regions of disease and pestilence, so we must keep away from worldly and evil influences, and live near to God, that our souls may be in health. *

Labor to know the Lord more clearly and fully; to know more of Christ, and to know him to better purpose, so as to be more like him, and to love him better.—MATTHEW HENRY.

May we daily grow in grace;
Faithful run the heavenly race,
Trained by wisdom, led by love,
Till we reach our rest above.
Till we there thy face shall see,
Blest for ever, Lord, with thee!



There will I meet thee, I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat.—Ex. xxv. 22.

AM I faithful to the precious privilege God grants to his people, of meeting him at the mercy-seat, and there conversing with him as a friend with a friend? There do I spread before him all my wants, and difficulties, and troubles, asking for grace and strength, to do or suffer, as to him may seem best? Am I as earnest and full of faith in speaking to God, as I would be in speaking to an earthly friend? Do I bear in mind his own declaration and promise, that according to my faith the blessing shall be?

It is not the length, but the strength of prayer that is required; not the labor of the life, but the travail of the heart, that prevails with God. Let thy words be few, but full and to the purpose.—I. S. SPENCER.

Frequent prayer is a most natural remedy against sin.—BISHOP WILSON.

The best and sweetest flowers of Paradise, God gives to his people when they are on their knees in the closet. Prayer, if not the very gate of heaven, is the key to let us in to its holiness and its joys.—T. BROOKS.

When to the closet I repair,
To breathe my soul's desires in prayer,
When bending low at Jesus' feet,
I look toward the mercy-seat,
This promise, Lord, shall be my plea,
"There, suppliant, I will meet with thee."

Be not weary in well doing.—2 THESS. iii. 13.

DO I keep in mind, continually, the fact, that this life is a warfare, and that I am to follow the great Captain of salvation faithfully to the end? And when weary and discouraged in the conflict, do I look to him for courage and strength to persevere? Does earnest prayer begin and accompany my daily warfare? However valiantly I fight, do I look for victory only through my Saviour's grace?

Presumption is heart-whole and self-confident, and so off its guard. But faith has a sense of weakness, and looks to the promises, and seeing the face of Christ therein, is made bold and confident to fight manfully to the end.—RUTHERFORD.

Faith evermore overlooks the difficulties of the way, and bends her eyes only to the end. She looks back to the cross and is at peace; and forward to the crown and pants for its possession.—BISHOP HALL.

Teach me to live! 'Tis easier far to die,
Gently and silently to pass away;
On earth's long night to close the weary eye,
And waken to the coming glorious day.
Teach me that harder lesson, how to live,
To serve thee in the darkest ways of life;
Arm me for conflict, now fresh vigor give,
And make me conqueror in the holy strife!

My word shall not return unto me void.—ISA. lv. 11.

WHEN trying to do good, and seeing no immediate fruits of our labors, is not here a word of encouragement? Is it not comforting to have the divine assurance, that every good word spoken, every Christian effort put forth, every holy life lived, shall not be lost, but bring forth fruit? Is this thought an incentive to speak for God with loving and prayerful earnestness, and to endeavor so to live as to honor him and lead others to him?

The difficulties with which we meet as laborers in God's vineyard, instead of discouraging, should stimulate to greater diligence, to more fervent prayer, to the more diligent study of God's word, and to the assurance, because he has promised, that his word shall not return unto him void.

*

Since the world began, no true work for God was ever wasted; no true word spoken for him has ever failed of doing good; no true life has ever been in vain. The seed sown may not rise in a moment, but there is immortal vitality in it, and the harvest shall be sure.

By the light of day, or in shades of night,
We must sow by faith, and not by sight.
And though all around may seem drear and dark,
Hope sends, through the promise, its glimmering spark.
Fear not, for that faint and scarce visible ray,
Shall expand to the light of an endless day!

Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—1 JOHN iii. 3.

IF I hope to be for ever with Christ hereafter, must I not seek to attain here the character that will fit me for the enjoyment of his presence? Must I not study the utmost purity and holiness of heart and life, and endeavor daily to be growing in the divine likeness? Do I realize that as I must be justified to have a title to heaven, so I must be sanctified to be prepared for it? If I am saved by hope, must I not be purified by hope?

We are to keep the heart pure, by keeping it in fellowship with Christ; to keep the tongue pure, by using it only for Christ; to keep the life pure, by living in all things for Christ. In thought, word, feeling, action, we should aim at that purity which may make us like Christ.—J. SMITH.

By shaking the magnetic needle, you may move it from its place; but it returns to it the moment it is left to itself. In like manner, believers may fall into sin; but no sooner do they wake to reflection, than they repent, and endeavor to mend their ways, and resume a life of godliness.—GOTTHOLD.

Hast thou the love of Christ
The Saviour known?
The love that passeth knowledge—the rich grace
That stooped to poverty and death, to place
Thee on his throne?
Then will thy heart be pure; thy life be given
To walk with him on earth, with him to reign in
heaven.

The tree is known by his fruit.—MATT. xii. 33.

DO I bear in mind that the heart is the fountain, and that its streams flow forth in words, and deeds, and habits, and in the entire life? And by these, do I remember that the character will be judged? Do I realize that the truly faithful Christian in this resembles the Saviour, that he both is good, and does good? Am I one that brings forth good fruit? Does my life honor God, and do good to men? Is my fruit to myself, or to Christ?

The hearts of believers are like gardens, wherein are not only flowers, but also weeds; and as the former must be cherished, so the latter must be nipped. If nothing but showers of promises fell upon the heart, the weeds of corruption would grow apace, unless they were nipped by the severity of threatenings.—OWEN.

Let us not forget that we are always bearing fruit of one kind or another. The good seed of the kingdom is springing up and bearing the fruit of holiness unto everlasting life; or the evil seed of the world and sin is bearing fruit unto everlasting death. By our fruits we shall be known and judged, both here and hereafter.—T. BATE.

Christian, wouldst thou fruitful be?
Jesus says, "Abide in me."
From him all thy fruit is found;
May it to his praise abound!
May he ever dwell with thee,
So thy life shall fruitful be!

Abstain from all appearance of evil. —1 THESS. v. 22.

DO I realize that those who shun not the very appearance of evil, may soon be led on to evil itself; that those who avoid not the temptations and approaches to sin, will not long abstain from actually committing it? Am I careful to refrain from anything, which, though not itself wrong, yet possibly having the appearance of wrong, might seem inconsistent in myself, and be a stumbling-block in the way of others?

The life may speak when the tongue is silent; and to avoid evil is akin to doing good. *

Be inconsistent, and enmity to the gospel may be propagated over a parish. Give occasions of offence, and many may fall: those entering the way of life may be discouraged; and those who have already entered, may be made to stumble. You cannot live only for yourselves. A thousand fibres connect you with your fellow-men; and along those fibres, as sympathetic threads, run your actions as causes, and they come back to you as effects.—MELVILL.

My gracious Lord, I own thy right
 To every service I can pay;
 And call it my supreme delight,
 To hear thy dictates and obey.
 'Tis to my Saviour I would live;
 To him who for my ransom died;
 Nor can all worldly honor give,
 Such bliss as crowns me at his side.

—DODDRIDGE.

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.—ISA. xl. 29.

TN hours of discouragement, adversity, or trial, do I feel the sustaining power of God's promise, and rely as firmly on him then, as in the full sunshine of peace and joy? If such comfort is not present when most I need it, is it not from my want of faith and trust in that divine Helper who never yet failed any who stayed themselves on him? Is not his promise the sure foundation of all the encouragement and strength I need, if I will but rely upon it?

No one can overestimate his own weakness, or the strength that comes from dependence on God. *

Provide for, and help me, O Lord; for this world, out of the stores of thy providence; and in spiritual things, out of the fullness there is in Christ. Help me in health, that I may not slide; in sickness, that I may not murmur; in plenty, that I may not be proud; in poverty, that I may not complain; in all things, that I may live to thee.—J. SMITH.

Commit thy way to God,
The weight that makes thee faint;
Worlds are to him no load;
To him breathe thy complaint.
On God alone rely,
Then shalt thou safe go on:
Fix on his work thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.—GERHARDT.

So run, that ye may obtain.—1 COR. ix. 24.

AM I standing still, or pressing forward in the divine life? With the final reward in view, am I running the Christian race with the fixed and earnest purpose to win the incorruptible crown? Do I watch against the temptations and allurements that might beguile me from the way? Do I remember the great cloud of witnesses, and lay aside every weight, and guard against the sins that may beset me, and still run with patience? Above all, do I look continually to Jesus, and rest all my hopes on him?

So live that every failure may be a step to success, and every detection of what is wrong, a step to what is right. *

In the kingdom of Christ, where inward character is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its due success. Sow for time, and you may succeed for time. But sow the seeds of life—of humbleness, pure-heartedness, and love, and in eternity every minutest grain will come up with an increase of thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

Up, Christian up! thy cares resign ;
The past, the future, are not thine.
Show forth to-day the Saviour's praise ;
Redeem the curse of evil days ;
Life's shadow, in its lengthening gloom,
Falls daily nearer to the tomb.
To Jesus look ; in faith press on ;
And thine shall be the unfading crown !

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.—ROM. xii. 9.

DO I abhor sin as evil in itself, as well as from its tendency and consequences? Do I endeavor to keep a sensitive and faithful conscience, that shall warn me against its first approaches, and lead me to shrink from it? Do I hate and turn from every form of sin, because it is offensive to a loving and forgiving Father, and grieving to the Holy Spirit, and because its every commission crucifies the Son of God afresh? Do I seek to grow in all that is good and holy?

We must abhor ourselves for our sins, not from mere earthly principles, but for the manifold indignities they offer to God; to the law of his justice, the awe of his majesty, the honor of his reverence, the dread of his power, and the long-suffering of his love.

—BISHOP ANDREWS.

There is more bitterness in sin's ending, than ever was sweetness in sin's acting. If we see only good in its commission, we shall suffer nothing but woe in its conclusion.—DYER.

Walk in the light! and sin, abhorred,
Shall not defile again;
The blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord,
Shall cleanse from every stain.
Walk in the light! thy path shall be
Peaceful, serene, and bright:
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God himself is light!—BARTON.

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins.—ISA. xliv. 22.

HAVE I come to God, by faith in Christ, for that pardon which blots out sin and scatters the dark cloud that separates between the soul and him? If so, do I take the comfort he so freely offers; and in humble confidence and joyous trust, do I rest all my hopes on him? Do I look to him as to a father, in the spirit of a loving child? Having much forgiven, do I love much? Do I so live near to him, as always to enjoy the light of his countenance?

If believers have discomfort and uneasiness on account of their past sins, as though they were still imputed to them, they are undervaluing the perfectly finished work of Christ, and doubting the veracity and promise of God.

Judge of God, not by your own sense, but by his promise; not by your frames and feelings, but by his love and grace in Christ Jesus. Believe firmly; hope confidently; love fervently; walk humbly; pray earnestly; work diligently; and wait quietly, and you may at all times have joy in God.—J. MASON.

Arrayed in mortal flesh,
He like an angel stands,
And holds the promises,
And pardons in his hands:
Commissioned from his Father's throne,
To make his grace to mortals known.

Redeeming the time.—EPH. v. 16.

DO I realize, as I ought, the immense value of time? Do I feel, as I should, the importance of redeeming or improving it? Do I fill up my time with proper employments, which are often the surest safeguards against temptation and evil thoughts? Do I seek out and improve opportunities of doing good, and so redeem time? And do I look on time as one of the sacred talents committed by God to my care to be improved for him, and for which I am soon to give account?

No man is a better merchant than he that lays out his time upon God, and his money upon the poor.—**BISHOP TAYLOR.**

Time well employed is Satan's deadliest foe; it leaves no opening for the lurking fiend.—**C. WILCOX.**

The great rule of moral conduct, is, next to God, to respect time.—**LAVATER.**

We always have time enough, if we will but improve it well.—**GOETHE.**

As if you could kill time, without injuring eternity! —**THOREAU.**

Let no present moment pass,
Without blessings on its head;
And as Time metes out his glass,
While our sands are numbered,
Faithfully improve to-day—
Soon 'twill sleep with ages fled!

He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.—PHIL. i. 6.

IN every hour of weakness or despondency, or when the conflict with sin is severe, is it not a blessed comfort, that Christ has promised to carry on his good work to the end? Do I rest, at all times, on his help, making it my chief concern to fulfill my duty toward him, and to find my happiness in him? Do I thankfully acknowledge that whatever of good there may be in me, is of him, and that he alone can sustain it? Do I trust myself entirely to him, for time and eternity?

Faith in Jesus is the trust and reliance of the heart on him for help and deliverance; and such trust on our part, shall never be disappointed.—VENN.

Our faith would often fail through temptation and trials, through troubles without, and weakness and sin within, but for Jesus and his promises. He begins in us the work of grace, and he sustains it to the end. He first planted the seed of faith in us; and as it sprang up, he has kept it ever since, and will keep it to the end.

Heaven and earth may pass away;
God's free grace shall not decay;
He hath said, and will fulfill,
All the pleasure of his will.
By his loving, powerful hand,
He will aid thee firm to stand;
Those whom Jesus once hath loved,
From his grace are never moved.—HILL.

The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.—ROM. viii. 26.

DO I always seek the help of the Spirit in prayer, that I may pray aright, and for that which is really best for myself, as well as most for God's glory? Do I realize that, of myself, I know not what to ask, being so prone to separate the end from the means? Do I feel that in manner, I often do not pray as I ought; and that my affections will be cold, and my thoughts wander, and my petitions will be too much occupied with self, and with present comforts, unless the Holy Spirit aid me?

“I could write down twenty cases,” said a good man, “where I wished and prayed that God would do otherwise than he did; but where now I see that if my prayer had been literally answered, and I had had my desire, it would have led to evil and not to good. And now I have learned to add to all my prayers, ‘Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’”

Since oft, by passion's force inclined,
And oft by stubborn will,
We blindly shun the latent good,
And grasp the specious ill,
Not what we wish, but what we want,
Oh, let thy grace supply:
The good unasked, in mercy grant;
The ill, though asked, deny.—MERRICK.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—ROM. viii. 9.

HAVE I the Spirit of Christ? Am I meek, lowly, humble, patient, self-denying, benevolent, as he was? Every day do I endeavor to live as he lived? Does his Spirit so dwell in me, as to bring forth, continually, the peaceable fruits of righteousness? Does my faith fix only on him; my love go forth supremely to him; in my life do I seek to honor him? Do I take him for my Teacher, my Example, my Guide, my Master, my Friend, my Hope, my endless portion?

To be a Christian is not a mere play on a word, but expresses the fact, that as love, purity, goodness, truth, mercy, and the like are the same in all beings, so must the believer who possesses them in kind, be one with Christ who possesses them in perfection. He must see his ideal, and all he most loves, realized in Christ, and the deepest desires of his soul met in being made like him; and he must recognize it as heaven itself to be with him, and to be as he is for ever.—MCLEOD.

Jesus! I live to thee,
Thou loveliest and best;
My life in thee, thy life in me,
In thy blest love I rest.
Living or dying, Lord,
I ask but to be thine;
My life in thee, thy life in me,
Makes heaven for ever mine!

—HARBAUGH.

There is but a step between me and death —1 SAM.
xx. 3.

AM I not prone to think of death as a precipice at a distance, toward which I am gradually approaching, and over which I must by and by plunge? But is it not rather a precipice on the very verge of which I am every day walking, and over which a single step may at any moment, take me to eternity? Am I living in constant readiness to go, whenever God shall call me away? Am I prepared to depart, and be with Christ, whenever I may be summoned from this world?

The sublimity of wisdom, is, to do those things living, which are to be desired when dying.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

At death we but leave one place to go to another. If godly, we go from earth to heaven; from our friends on earth, to our friends in heaven; from the valley of tears, to the mount of joy; from a howling wilderness, to a heavenly paradise. Who would be unwilling to exchange a Sodom for a Zion, an Egypt for a Canaan, sin for holiness, misery for glory?—KEACH.

All souls are thine. We may not say,
The dead in Christ have passed away,
When from the world and flesh set free,
We know them living still to thee.
Released from sin, and toil, and strife,
With thee they live the heavenly life;
Their thoughts, their works, their powers are thine,
For ever blest with joys divine!—ELLERTON.

We would see Jesus.—JOHN xii. 21.

IS this the sincere and earnest desire of my heart, to have clear views of the character of Christ, and constant communion of soul with him? Do I look for him in his word, in his ordinances, in his providence, and in the influences of his Holy Spirit? Do I long for a closer union of heart and life with him? Is he the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely to me? Do I long and pray for entire conformity to him?

Christ Jesus is all that we need; and he has all that we want. We should look to him; long for him; live upon him; walk with him; work for him; aim in everything to glorify him. Have what we may, without him we are poor; but with him we are rich, though all else be taken away. *

We have a race to run, a prize to win, and a mark to reach; and to be successful, we must look away from everything else, and fix our eyes on Jesus. Looking to him we cannot fail; for in him we have courage, and strength, and sympathy, and an example, and all the help that we need. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of the faith.—J. SMITH.

Only Jesus would I see;
Only like him would I be;
Only for him would I live;
Only to him would I give
All I am, and all I have;
All to him who died to save!

They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.—MATT. ix. 12.

DO I feel and acknowledge myself to be one of the sick ones who need the care of the Great Physician? Am I willing to be healed by him, in his way, and by such treatment as he thinks best? Have I long since despaired of any remedy from myself or from my fellow-men? Do I look away from all other sources of help to Jesus, the Great Physician? Do all my hopes for time and eternity rest on him?

The greatest sinner, who trusts only in Christ's blood, will assuredly be saved. The best man in the world who trusts in his own goodness, will be lost.
—HEWITSON.

Let this thought, that God cannot lie, keep, in conscious safety, the heart of every one who looketh to Jesus. They who look shall be saved. It is not to him who sees Christ brightly that the promises are made, but to him who looks. A bright view may minister to comfort, but it is looking to Christ that ministers to safety.—CHALMERS.

I need thee, precious Saviour, for I am full of sin;
My soul is dark and guilty; my heart is dead within;
I need the cleansing fountain where I can always flee;
The blood of Christ most precious, my only, perfect
plea.

In life, in death, in heaven, my highest joy shall be,
To sing thy praises ever; to look, my Lord, to thee!

—F. WHITFIELD.

With thee is the fountain of life.—Ps. xxxvi. 9.

DO I feel that to me God is the fountain of spiritual life, and that from him come all the strength and comfort of my soul? Do I find in him light, perfection, wisdom, guidance, joy? In him are the cravings of my soul satisfied? And the more I am filled, do I the more desire to be filled with all the fullness of God? Can I say, with the Psalmist, that my soul thirsts for God; for clearer views of his character—for greater conformity to his will?

In all the changes of life what a joy to look to Christ, and find our joy in him.

The soul that thirsts for God is alive to him, and experimentally acquainted with him, and will never be satisfied with anything but him. It will long for a sense of his love, for the presence of his Spirit, for the enjoyment of his favor, for constant communion and fellowship with him. It will never cease thirsting till it is filled with all his fullness in heaven.

*

Blest in thee, our praises flow
Even in this vale of woe;
Waters in the desert rise;
Manna feeds us from the skies;
On we go, from strength to strength,
Till we reach thy throne at length;
At thy feet adoring fall,
Who hast led us safe through all.

—H. F. LYTE.

According to your faith, be it unto you.—MATT. ix. 29.

DO I realize that a living faith not only unites to Christ, but disperses doubts, gives power in prayer, imparts strength for duty, and brings peace and comfort and joy to the soul? Do I seek to strengthen my faith by the prayerful study of God's word, and by dwelling on the rich promises of the Saviour? Do I endeavor by works of obedience to find evidence of the reality of my faith, and to see that faith is the mainspring of my works of obedience? Can I sincerely say and pray, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief"?

The sin of unbelief is that which besets the sinner more than his evil ways. But if thou entertain these unbelieving thoughts, thou transgressest Christ's command; abidest thine own tormentor; and keepest thyself from establishment in grace.—BUNYAN.

Though faith does nothing of itself, nothing alone, it does everything under God, and by God, and through God. Its humble dependence, and its meek, childlike spirit, after all constitute its proper self. These are the essence and life of faith.—STOUGHTON.

Faith is the last, strong link 'twixt God and man.
There is more wisdom in its whispered prayer,
Than in the wisest lore of all the schools.
The soul upon its knees lays hold on God;
Worship believing, is the key of heaven.
"I do believe; help thou mine unbelief!"
Is the last, greatest utterance of the soul!—BIGG.

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—Ps. xxxii. 5.

DO I rejoice in the blessed thought that there is forgiveness with God, through Christ, for every one who is penitent? Have I confessed my sins to him, asking for pardon and grace to forsake them? Do I mourn my sins of omission, as well as of commission? Do I take the blame of all on myself, not endeavoring to excuse or extenuate my errors or sins, by throwing the blame on others, on circumstances, or on the force of temptation? Does pardoning grace make me humble, as well as thankful?

He who thinks he has no need of Christ, has too high thoughts of himself. He who thinks Christ cannot help him, has too low thoughts of Christ.—J. MASON.

We often tell God that we are sinners, miserable and helpless; but can we bear to be told so by others? Are we willing, from any source, to know our sins that we may forsake them?—T. ADAMS.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.
The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.—COWPER.

Let no man deceive himself.—1 COR. iii. 18.

DO I realize how difficult it is, truly to know one's own heart? Am I sensible of my ignorance in this respect; and do I earnestly ask God to enable me to know myself, and to make me wise unto salvation? Do I distrust my own understanding; and realize that self-flattery is next step to self-deceit; and that the way of true wisdom, is, to be willing to be enlightened and taught of God? Do I watch and pray against self-deception, as one of the most fearful sources of danger to the soul?

Remember that the time for self-examination and self-knowledge, is, after all, very short. Soon you will know the great secret. You may masquerade it for a while in the dress of a saint, but death will soon strip off the covering, and at the judgment you will stand revealed just as you are.—SPURGEON.

Oh, what a change it would make in the world, if men were brought to a knowledge of themselves! How many would seek to faithful ministers for advice, who now deride them! How many would cry day and night for mercy, and beg for the life of their immortal souls, who now content themselves with formal prayer, or perhaps never pray at all.—BAXTER.

Search me, O God! and know my heart;

Try me, my secret soul survey;

And warn thy servant to depart,

From every false and evil way.

So shall thy truth my guidance be,

Through life to immortality!—MONTGOMERY.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.—2 COR. v. 10.

DO I bear in mind continually that this world is but a state of probation, and the future world one of retribution? Do I realize the certainty of the final judgment, that we must be judged; its universality, that all must appear; its nearness, that at any hour we may be called to it, and at farthest, very soon? Do I rest my hopes of acceptance there on any merit or works of my own, or only on Christ? If I love and trust him, need I have any fears as to the great and final day?

Here on earth we are placed as stewards: soon we must give an account of our stewardship. Here we are gradually forming characters and fixing habits: soon we shall pass the point beyond which neither can be changed except in degree. Here we are on probation: there an endless retribution awaits us. And how soon we may go to it, no one of us knows. We only know it will be soon

*

May we all walk in humble faith, and holy chastening
fear,
And see with calm and steadfast eye, the Judge of all
appear;
Prepared to join the adoring throng before the throne
of God,
Redeemed and freed from sin and death by Christ's
atoning blood.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.
—ROM. v. 20.

DOES this view of the boundless grace of God give me comfort, assuring me as it does, that the enormity of sin can never prevent my acceptance and salvation, if I do but repent and believe on Christ? Do I watch over myself, lest through the very abundance of divine mercy, there should creep in, unawares, a laxity of feeling, or a less earnest and persevering warfare against sin? Does the very richness of grace but make me more faithful in duty?

I must never think my sins too great, too aggravated, too presumptuous, to hinder me from fleeing to Christ. The weight of my sins should act like the weight of a clock, which makes it go faster in proportion as it is heavier.—MCHEYNE.

When Satan charges sin upon the conscience, then for the soul to charge it upon Christ, this is gospel-like. Christ serves for this very end.—C. WILCOX.

He that hath light thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God.—OWEN.

It is not that I feel less weak; but thou
Wilt be my strength. It is not that I see
Less sin; but more of pardoning love in thee,
And all-sufficient grace. Enough! And now
All fluttering thought is stilled; I only rest,
And feel that thou art near, and know that I am
blest!

Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.
—JOHN vi. 37.

DO I realize the fullness, and believe in the sincerity of this gracious declaration of the Saviour? Do I feel that his invitation is not only general, to all, but that it is individual and personal, addressed to myself, and that its comfort and encouragement are meant for me? Have I come to him, and to God by him? Does his love draw me; and does my sense of need and danger drive me to him? Do I endeavor, at all times, to live near to him?

A man may go to heaven without health, without riches, without honors, without pleasures, without learning, without friends, but he can never get there without Christ.—DYER.

If in all my life Satan and I did ever strive for any one word of God, it was for this good word of God in Christ, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;”—he at one end, and I at the other. Oh, what work we made! It was for this that we did so tug and strive. He pulled, and I pulled; but God be praised, I overcame him.—RUTHERFORD.

Come, says Jesus' sacred voice,
Come, and make my paths your choice;
I will guide you safely home;
Weary pilgrim, hither come.
Hither come, for here is found,
Balm that flows for every wound;
Peace that ever shall endure;
Rest eternal, sacred, sure!—BARBAULD.

We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

DO I look forward with hope to the meeting with Christ in heaven? Is it a joy to think that then I shall for ever be free from sin, as well as from suffering; that I shall be like the Saviour, because I shall see him as he is? Do I seek, here on earth, for clearer views of his character, and for closer and still closer communion with him, that I may become more and more like him? Do I daily grow in his likeness here, and so have evidence that I shall dwell with him for ever hereafter?

If we expect to live with Christ in heaven, we must live with him on earth.—J. MASON.

Inward conformity to the grace and holiness of Christ, is the fundamental design of the Christian life; the only satisfying evidence of an interest in his love, and the only preparation for seeing and enjoying him for ever in heaven. If we have not his Spirit here, we shall not have his presence hereafter.

*

Jesus, draw this heart of mine,
Daily, hourly, nearer thine ;
Looking, longing, thus I'll seek thee ;
And in seeking, hope to meet thee ;
Meeting thee, rejoice at last ;
And rejoicing hold thee fast,
Till, beyond the grave, I see
Thee in heaven, and heaven in thee !

Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith.—COL. ii. 7.

DO I realize that the more closely I walk with Christ, the more firmly I shall be established in the faith; and that the more intelligent and vigorous my faith, the closer will be my walk with him? Do I remember that a holy life and a living faith always go together; and that we cannot be built up in Christ unless we are first rooted in him? Am I united to him by a true and active faith, loving his truth, doing his will, growing up in all things into him?

There are two different kinds of growth into Christ; a growth downward, when the believer becomes more rooted in his principles and established in his hold on the covenant; and a growth upward, like the palm and the cedar in the Lord's enclosed garden. But all growth comes from union with Christ.

While you live right, nothing goes wrong. A soul at peace with God cannot be greatly disturbed by the world, for being united to Christ, it has its life and joys in him, and its blessings from him.—JACKSON.

Thee I love, O Christ, alone,
For thy wondrous mercy shown
'Tis thy wounds my healing give;
To thy cross I look and live:
Thou my life—oh let me be,
Rooted, grafted, built on thee!

I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.—Ps. xxxix. 1.

DO I bear in mind continually, how often and how solemnly the Bible speaks of the tongue; and that our Saviour himself tells us, that by our words we shall be justified, or by our words be condemned, in the day of final judgment? Do I seek for divine help, that I may ever speak wisely, kindly, charitably, and for the happiness and good of others; and not idly, foolishly, disparagingly, falsely, or so as justly to offend either God or man? May I always speak in the spirit of Christ, and so as to honor him!

Weighed in the balance of Scripture, our words are of the most solemn importance. They reveal our true character; they exercise a powerful influence for evil, or for good; they will form an important item of the account each one of us is to render at the last great day. Let us, then, take heed to our words, and see that our speech is always with grace, so as to be acceptable to God.—EVERARD.

Guard well thy lips; for none can ever know
What evils from the thoughtless tongue may flow;
What grief be caused, what guilt may be incurred,
By one incautious, heedless, hasty word.
Set God before thee; think that every word
Thy lips pronounce, by him, on high, is heard;
Oh, couldst thou realize this solemn thought,
What care, what caution would thy lips be taught!

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—GAL. iv. 18.

If earnestness of feeling and action should correspond to the importance of the cause in which one is engaged, then can I have too much zeal in the service of Christ, and for the spread of his kingdom in the world? Am I indeed zealous so to live and act, as to honor God and do good to men? Am I diligent and unwearied as a laborer in God's vineyard, working in season and out of season? Am I at all times decided and earnest as a faithful follower of Christ?

Zeal without knowledge, is like haste to a man who is walking in the dark.—JOHN NEWTON.

Let us not call that zeal for God, which is only our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those who differ from us. It strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body.—CUDWORTH.

Go, labor on ; spend and be spent ;
Thy joy to do the Father's will ;
It is the way the Saviour went ;
Should not his followers tread it still ?
Go, labor on ; 'tis not for naught ;
Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain ;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not ;
The Master praises :—what are men ?

—H. BONAR.

Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.—LUKE xii. 48.

DO I feel that I am but the steward of the manifold gifts of God, and that I am sacredly bound to use them all for him, and as he directs? On my time, talents, influence, property—on all that I have and am, do I remember that he has written, “Occupy till I shall come?” Do I ask, in everything, how I may best honor God and do good to men? Do I keep the great and final account habitually in view, and seek so to live as to be accepted, at last, as good and faithful?

Nothing that I have is my own. It is only lent me, for a little season, by God. To him I must soon render an account for the use I have made of it. Rightly used, all will be as a means of grace to me, to perfect my character and fit me for heaven. Used only for self and selfish ends, all will be at last but my condemnation.—I. S. SPENCER.

Christ has left us on earth for a while, to represent him, to witness for him, to work for him. He will come again soon, to call us to account. We are but his stewards. Let us so be faithful in all that is entrusted to us, that when the call is heard, “Give an account of thy stewardship,” we may not hear that fearful addition, “Thou mayest no longer be steward!” *

To-day be faithful in living,
For God and your fellow-man;
Let loving and doing, and giving,
Be close to your heart and hand.
For to-day, so far as you certainly know,
May be the last you will have below.

Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.—ROM. xi. 33.

WHEN I think of the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus, like Paul, do I stand in amazement at its wondrous depths, and in thankfulness worship and adore at the feet of its Author? Do I feel my weakness and nothingness; and that after all my searching, I know but nothing in comparison with the infinite knowledge of God? Do I feel, too, that his love is as boundless as his wisdom? And does my whole heart go forth in love to him?

The riches of divine grace may be compared to a richly-furnished cabinet, to which Christ is the only door. His love is the only key to its wondrous treasures; and experience is the only key to the fullness of their meaning and value to ourselves.

If all our love were extinguished, at the love of Christ we might easily rekindle it. Not a word that he spoke, not a work that he did, not a suffering that he endured, but was a proof and a result of his love. He purchased love, he brought love, he exercised love, he bequeathed love, he lived in love, and he died in love. He is all love.—I. S. SPENCER.

Oh for this love let rocks and hills,
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues,
The Saviour's praises speak.
Angels, assist our mighty joys;
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.—WATTS.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.—ROM. xii. 3.

DO I endeavor to know myself; to see myself as God sees me? And does this self-knowledge lead me to think humbly of myself, and not to have too high an opinion of my own judgment, or ability, or performances? Does self-knowledge check everything like self-conceit, and keep me from too high an estimate of my own wisdom or attainments? Do I look constantly to the standard of God's law, and seek for grace to be more fully conformed to it?

It is the peculiarity of the Christian religion, and of the Christian character, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions. The Pharisee could thank God that he was not as other men; it was the apostle Paul who felt that he was the chief of sinners.

Avoid the habit of speaking humbly of yourself, as the snare of the adversary. Can you bear not to speak of yourself at all? That is the question.—HOWELS.

Iowliness of heart is real dignity; and humility is the brightest jewel in the Christian's crown.—BOND.

When Mary chose the better part,
She meekly sat at Jesus' feet;
And Lydia's humble, trusting heart,
Was made for God's own dwelling meet;
And most beloved of heaven is he
Whose soul is all humility.—J. MONTGOMERY.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.—Ps. ciii. 2.

FOR all God's mercies to me, both negative and positive, am I habitually and truly thankful? Do I count as mercies the evils from which he has saved me? And for all his positive blessings, am I sincerely grateful to him? Does my gratitude go deeper than the lips, even to my inmost heart? Is every blessing received, a fresh bond to bind my soul to the infinite Giver in devout thankfulness and love?

If we turn God's benefits into occasions of sin, we unthankfully imitate the earth from which we were taken; for that makes use of the heat of the sun to send up vapors that obscure the light, and chill the warmth communicated to it.—BISHOP HOPKINS.

A thankful spirit, is a joyous and cheerful spirit. If we would go hopefully and happily through life, we should take God's blessings as he sends them, being grateful for them, and think more of what we have, than of what we have not. *

When thou hast truly thanked thy God
For every blessing sent,
But little time will then remain
For murmur or lament.
The mercies which thy thoughts employ,
Will fill thy life with cheerful joy.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.—Ps. ciii. 3.

DO I estimate as I ought the boundless privileges which Christ confers on all who come to him in penitence and faith? Do I realize the greatness of the sins he forgives; the extent of the impurity he cleanses; the infinite glory and blessedness to which he entitles, and for which by his grace he prepares us? Do I endeavor prayerfully and earnestly to fall in with his designs of mercy, and to live for the great ends which he sought by his own death to accomplish in and for me?

How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand! As little do I take away of the great sea of the boundless love of Christ.—RUTHERFORD.

Paul, says Luther, had three wishes: that he might be found in Christ; that he might magnify Christ; that he might be with Christ. If we come to him for pardon and cleansing, all these ends are ours. We are accepted in him by faith; we shall magnify him by holy living; we shall be with him for ever in glory.

*

Every virtue I possess,
Every conquest I have won,
Every thought of holiness,
Is from thee, O Christ, alone!
May thy grace, with loving power,
Freely pardon all my sin;
May thy Spirit, every hour,
Make and keep me pure within!

Ye are the salt of the earth.—MATT. v. 13.

BELIEVING the gospel myself, do I seek to lead others to receive it? Trusting to Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, do I endeavor to win others to him? Remembering that example is more powerful than precept, do I seek to be a living example of the blessed effects of the gospel? By a consistent, holy, exemplary life, and conversation, do I strive to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and so to commend his service to others?

Christians are the Bible of the world, to which it looks to judge of the reality of religion. They should so live that all may believe it.

There is an energy of moral suasion in a good man's life, passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty, than the tongues of men or angels. Christianity itself, I believe, owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the miracles or precepts or parables of Christ, but to his own character, and the character it is fitted to form in his disciples.—CHALMERS.

Take my soul, and body's powers;
Take my memory and my will;
All my goods, and all my hours;
All I think, or know, or feel;
All I hope, or wish, or do;
All my heart, and make it new.
Take my life, and let it be,
'Wholly consecrate to thee!

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.—PHIL. ii. 4.

IN caring for myself, do I care also for others? Do I regard their character, happiness, property and reputation, as I would have them regard my own? Do I put away the spirit of faultfinding, and censoriousness, and unjust or hasty judgment, and cherish toward all, the spirit of Christian sympathy and benevolence? Do I seek for opportunities of doing a kind act, or speaking a kind word, or giving a kind look to those with whom I come in contact?

The very heart and root of sin is an independent and selfish spirit. We erect the idol self, and not only wish others to worship, but worship it ourselves.—
CECIL.

If I could but be master of myself, of my own mind, my own wit, my own credit and ease, how blessed were I! Alas! we have more need to be redeemed from ourselves, than from the devil and the world.—
RUTHERFORD.

Father of mercies, send thy grace,
All-powerful from above,
To form in our obedient souls,
The image of thy love.
Oh may our sympathizing hearts,
The generous pleasure know,
Kindly to share in others' joy,
And weep for others' woe.—DODDRIDGE.

Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds.
—JOB xxxvii. 21.

WHEN clouds of sorrow or suffering are over me do I look, in faith, for a light beyond them? Do I believe that when God seems to frown, it is but the hiding of his mercy, to lead me to look more earnestly, and cling more trustfully to him? Am I content to trust, where I cannot see? Do I look to the promises, when the prospect seems dark? Do I patiently and submissively wait for the revelation which is promised when faith is no longer needed?

No cloud can overshadow the true Christian but his faith will see a rainbow on it.—BISHOP HOPKINS.

Our little inch of time-suffering, is not worthy of our first night's welcome home to heaven.—RUTH-ERFORD.

Faith can support when nature shrinks. It can call God Father, even when he frowns; and make some discovery of a sun, even through the darkest cloud.—ARROWSMITH.

In life I often have discovered,
With gratitude and glad surprise,
When clouds of sorrow o'er me hovered,
God sent from them my best supplies.
In troubles he is ever near,
And shows me all a Father's care.
Then let me in his love confide,
And trustful still in hope abide.

The Lord God is a sun and shield.—Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

DOES darkness ever reign without, or seem to prevail within? If so, then do I remember that God is a sun to enlighten; to turn the darkness into day, and safely to guide and direct me? Or if I fear danger, then do I look to him who is the shield of his people, to guard them from the fiery darts of the wicked? Do I ever seek to walk in the light of the Lord, that he may be my Guide and my Protector?

God may sometimes delay his promise, but he will not deny it. He may sometimes change it, but he will not break it. Though sometimes strokes or frowns may come, yet believe his love more than your own fears or feelings.—T. WATSON.

Heaven is a place of complete victory and glorious triumph. This is the battle-field; there is the triumphal procession. This is the land of the sword and spear; that of the wreath and the crown; this of the garment rolled in blood, and of the dust of the fight; that of the trumpet's joyous sound, and of the white robe, and the shout of everlasting conquest.—SPURGEON.

Feeble we are; we cannot war with sin;
Anoint Thou us, and we will march victorious.
Not till by grace we are renewed within,
Can we be soldiers, valiant, true and glorious.
Spirit divine, be thou my spirit's shield,
Then in the conflict never will I yield,
But the good fight will manfully maintain,
And so at last with Christ himself shall reign!

The thought of foolishness is sin.—PROV. xxiv. 9.

DO I realize that God looks not only to the outward conduct, but to the heart—to the motives, the feelings, the affections; and that in his sight the thought, or intent of sin, is as truly chargeable with guilt as the actual perpetration itself? Do I, then, watch against the first risings of sinful thought in my heart, and strive to keep it from gaining ground and so leading on to outward transgression, knowing that it is offensive to God, and is to be repented of as truly as visible sinfulness?

As the heart is, so will the life be in the sight of God, for to him our thoughts, desires and dispositions are the clear evidence of character.—T. SCOTT.

The guilty deed is often but the dark shadow of the guilty thought; and this it is on which God frowns. It is this which in the silence of midnight, or in the solitude of the desert, or even amid the outward devotions of the sanctuary, may pollute the soul with stains and guilt which we are prone to think are only chargeable to the outward act. But God judges by what the heart is.

*

With self-accusing voice within,
The conscience tells of many a sin,
 In thought, and word, and deed ;
Cleanse thou that conscience from each stain,
The penitent restore again,
 From every burden freed !

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.—AMOS vi. 1.

DO I practically undervalue the means of grace, and so fail to live up to my privileges and obligations? Do I allow the things of time to outweigh the things of eternity? Do the pleasures of the world so allure, or the business of the world so engross, that I am neglecting the great duties of religion? Do I delude myself with the idea that the future will bring all needed opportunities for renewed fidelity or for repentance, and so rest satisfied in present shortcoming or unfaithfulness?

Beware of little concessions, little acquiescences, little indulgences, little conformities to the world. If vital religion is ever driven out of the soul, it will be as the Canaanites were driven out before the Israelites—by little and little.—H. MELVILL.

With loss of zeal and earnestness in religion, there is loss of character, loss of influence, loss of comfort, loss of usefulness, and so long as any remain in this state, loss of a well-grounded hope of heaven.—BUCK.

God is earnest; kneel and pray,
Ere thy season pass away;
Ere he sets the judgment throne;
Ere the day of grace be done.
Back from every wandering come,
To thy Father's heart and home;
Now he waits to hear thy cry;
Turn, and to his bosom fly!

Ye shall be a blessing.—ZECH. viii. 13.

DO I remember continually the example of Christ who went about doing good, and endeavor to cherish his spirit, and so to imitate him? Do I long to have others partake of the same blessings which God has so richly bestowed on me? If spiritual, do I labor to lead others to the Saviour that they may find them in him? If temporal, do I, as far as lies in my power, endeavor to minister to their wants, and add to their comfort and happiness?

Scarcely an hour passes in which we may not perform some little act of kindness that may add to the happiness of others.—BOWES.

There are joys that long to be ours, which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit a while upon the roof, and then fly away. Religion does not consist so much in joyful feelings, as in a constant exercise of devotedness to God, and in laying ourselves out for the good of others.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

Not by the years of life, is told
The length of life; but by the zeal
And kindly works, as growing old,
Men for each other do and feel.
His life is long whose work is well;
And be his station low or high,
He who the most good works can tell
Lives longest, though he soonest die!

—BROWNE.

Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you.
—JOHN xiv. 27.

HAVE I found peace in believing in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour? Has this peace its foundation in the knowledge and love of the truth? Does it keep both my mind and heart through Christ Jesus? In the sorrows and trials of life, does it support; for the duties of life, does it strengthen; amid the temptations of life, does it keep me calm and trustful in the Redeemer? Is it an intelligent, well-founded, settled, growing peace?

When Christ was about to leave the world, he made his will. His soul he committed to his Father; his body he bequeathed to Joseph; his clothes fell to the soldiers; his mother he left to the care of John; but what should he leave to his poor disciples who had left all for him? Silver and gold, he had none; but he left them that which was infinitely better, his peace. “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.”—MATTHEW HENRY.

Peace was the word our Saviour breathed,
When from our world his steps withdrew,
The gift he to his friends bequeathed,
With Calvary and the cross in view.
Redeemer! With adoring love,
Our spirits take thy rich bequest,
The watchword of the hosts above,
The passport to their realm of rest.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.—MATT. v. 9.

DO I remember that God is the God and Author of peace, and that he commands us to live in peace, and to promote it among others? Do I desire and seek and delight in peace? Do I endeavor to smooth away rough and jarring points, to make the best of annoying occurrences, to do what I can to soften prejudices, and reconcile differences, and turn enemies into friends? Does the peace of God rule in my heart, and is it evident in my life? Do I hope and expect to inherit the blessing of the peacemakers?

If religion has done nothing for your temper, it has done nothing for your soul.—CLAYTON.

Too many have no idea of the subjection of their temper to the influence of religion. And yet what is changed, if the temper is not? If a man is as passionate, malicious, resentful, sullen, moody, or morose, after his conversion as before it, what is he converted from, or to?—J. A. JAMES.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage sweet;
Sow smiles, and see the desert spring;
Sow wisdom for its harvest meet;
Sow sunlight for the joy 'twill bring.
As fast the swift-winged moments speed,
Freight them with peace, and truth and love,
With garnered sheaves of thought and seed,
For the glad ha-vest-home above.—BROWNE.

He cannot deny himself.—2 TIM. ii. 13.

OJGHT not this gracious assurance as to the promise and faithfulness of God, to set at rest for ever all disturbing and doubting thoughts in the mind and heart of the believer? Have I taken him at his word, and come to him, in all my sinfulness, knowing that since he has said it, he never will turn me away? Does my confidence stand firm and unshaken in all circumstances of life? Do I seek to lead others to the same trust?

If you come as a ruined and lost sinner to the Saviour, renouncing all confidence in yourself, and trusting only in the mercy and to the promises of God, he will hear your cry, will forgive your sins, and will turn your darkness into light.—J. HAWES.

It was good for me to come hither to learn a new mystery of Christ, that Christ's promise is to be believed against all appearances.—RUTHERFORD.

The God of love never leaves his promise unfulfilled or his work unfinished. What he begins in grace, he ends in glory.—GARDINER SPRING.

He by himself hath sworn;
I on his oath depend;
I shall, on eagle's wings upborne,
To heaven ascend.
There I shall see his face;
There shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace,
For evermore.—T. OLIVER.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.—GAL. vi. 2.

DO I endeavor always to cherish the spirit of sympathy and kindness for all about me? Am I forbearing to the weak, compassionate to the erring, and charitable to those who may have been overtaken in a fault, or who have fallen into evil? Am I ever ready to encourage the depressed, to help the feeble, to sympathize with the sorrowing, to relieve the suffering and distressed, and to bear with the infirmities of all, as Christ has borne, and still bears with me?

A true friend not only doubles our joys in prosperity, but he shares and lightens our sorrows in the hour of affliction.

In the intercourse of life, it is by little acts of watchful kindness, recurring daily and hourly, by words, by tones, by gestures, by looks, that affection is won and kept, and happiness conferred. He who neglects these trifles, and thinks that when some great sacrifice is called for, he will be ready to make it, will rarely do it; and if he does, it will be for his own sake, and not for the sake of others. And he will never be loved.—
SALA.

Save me from selfish pining; let my heart,
Drawn from itself, think not of its own smart.

Remembering others, let me live alway,
Not for myself alone, but have a part,
Such as a frail and erring spirit may,
In love which is of Thee, and which indeed thou art!

—WHITTIER.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind.—1 COR. xiii. 4.

D^O I bear in mind that charity is but another name for Christian love; and that if the spirit of love reign in the heart, it will lead us to bear injury and provocation without giving way to resentment or to the spirit of revenge? If we have this charity, will it not aid us to control passion, and to be patient, and long-suffering, and unselfish, and forgiving, and kind, and courteous, and obliging, and benevolent? Is not the spirit of charity the spirit of kindness, both in word and deed, and to all?

The same Bible that gives us the ten commandments enjoins that charity, which believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.—GUTHRIE.

If thou neglectest love to thy neighbor, in vain thou professest thy love to God; for by thy love to God, love to thy neighbor is begotten; and by love to thy neighbor, thy love to God is cherished.—QUARLES.

Not only kindness, but a special kindness is due to every one. Kindness is not kindness unless it be special. It is in its fitness, seasonableness, and individual application, that its charm consists.—FABER.

Meek and lowly, pure and holy,
Chief among the blessed three;
Turning sadness into gladness,
Blessed art thou, charity.
Works best pleasing God, most high,
Serve mankind in charity.

We all do fade as a leaf.—ISA. lxiv. 6.

LIKE the leaf, do I fulfill, in its season, the work God has given me to do? And then do I, in faith and patience, wait for the time when, like the leaf, I must pass away? Do I learn from the fading and falling leaf, and from the changing seasons, the transitory nature of all things here below? And do I set my affection on things above, and lay up my treasure there, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God?

The leaves do not change color from the blighting touch of the frost, but from the process of natural decay. They fall when the fruit has been ripened and their work is done. And their splendid change of coloring is but their graceful and beautiful surrender of life, when they have finished their summer offering of service to God and man. And one of the great lessons the fall of the leaf teaches, is this: Do your work well, and then be ready to depart when God shall call.

Sad autumn time! sweet symbol of repose,
Can I behold thy rich, harmonious close,
All duties done, all promises fulfilled,
As an all-wise, good Providence has willed,
Nor feel, by faith, a hopeful, calm desire,
Like thee, in finished glory, to expire?
Though like the leaf, I fade and pass away,
Thanks to thy grace, it is to endless day.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.—JOB xix. 26.

DO I continually remember that the same Saviour who lived and walked on earth, is now living in heaven? Do I rejoice in the assurance that he is with me at every moment; and in trial or sorrow, have I the same supporting confidence and trust in him that Job had in his afflictions? Can I say that he is my Redeemer, and that all my hopes rest on him? Do I look forward with joy to the time of his coming again, to gather his people to himself?

The resurrection of Christ is the pledge of the resurrection of his people, and his life that they shall live with him.

Yes, Christ lives. He lives to love me, to care for me, to watch over me, to supply all my needs, and to do me all possible good. And because he lives, I shall live also. I shall never be separated from him. No fiery trial, no fierce foe, no dark state of mind, no adverse temptation, no fall, even, shall ever separate me from the love of Christ.

*

Live now the life of faith,
The life divine;
Live in and on the ever-living One,
Who bears thee on his heart before the throne;
His life is thine!
Know that he lives; thy life to him be given;
He'll walk with thee on earth, and bring thee safe to
heaven.

If God be for us, who can be against us?—ROM. viii. 31.

DO I take the full comfort of this blessed truth, that God is on the side of his people, and that all evil machinations against them must fail, so that they are for ever safe? If he is for us, and we continue in his love, may we not overcome temptation, and defy the powers of darkness, and persevere unto the end? Let Satan do his worst; is he not chained? Let sin do its worst; is it not crucified through Christ? Let the world do its worst; is it not conquered through the cross?

What a blessed assurance, “that all things shall work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose.” The promise is sure; “we know.” Its extent is universal; “all things.” Its agency is efficient; all things “work.” Their working is harmonious; they work “together.” Its aim is benevolent; they work “for good.” It embraces all God’s children; all that “love God,” and are “called” of him. So that we need never doubt or fear, if we put our trust in him.

*

Fear not, I am with thee, oh be not dismayed;
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never, forsake.—G. KEITH.

I know whom I have believed.—2 TIM. i. 12.

IS Christ to me not only an all-sufficient, but a personal Saviour; and do I trust him as an infinite and loving Friend, as well as a Redeemer? Am I so one with him by faith, that I know because he lives I shall live also? Do I feel that my confidence rests on a sure foundation, and that nothing shall separate me from his love? From this assurance do I draw comfort in adversity, strength for duty, and the certainty of safety both for time and eternity?

When Dr. James Alexander was on his dying bed, some one said to him, “I hope you are able to say, I know *in* whom I have believed.” “You do not quote it right,” was his reply; “it is, I know *whom* I have believed. In an hour like this, I would not have even a preposition between me and my Saviour.”

If you have not the full faith of assurance, practice at least the faith of adherence. Cleave to God exactly as if you were certain of being accepted of him at last; and thus fulfilling his own conditions, you will be accepted, whether you are assured of it or not.

*

Faith, Hope, and Love, were questioned what they thought

Of future glory, which religion taught.
Now Faith believed it firmly to be true;
And Hope expected so to find it too;
But Love replied, with smiling, conscious glow,
Believe? Expect? I know it to be so!

Better is . . . he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.—PROV. xvi. 32.

DO I endeavor habitually to rule my spirit, according to the teaching of God's word, and so as to honor him? Knowing how difficult it is to do this, do I keep the example of the Saviour before me, and strive to cherish his meekness, forbearance, patience and self-control? Do I pray for grace to aid me to a thorough self-knowledge, and in the arduous work of self-restraint? Do I constantly seek the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that every thought and feeling may be brought into captivity to the will of God?

He who reigns within himself, and rules his passions, desires and fears, is more than a king.—MILTON.

The best government, says Goethe, is that which teaches us to govern ourselves. And, says Pythagoras, no man is free who cannot command himself. And Seneca declares, that he is of all others the most powerful, who has himself in his own power. And says another, the worst education which teaches self-denial and self-control, is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not these. *

My Saviour lives! his life is mine
Then let my life be wholly his.
Rise up, my soul! with strength divine,
Tread down the sin that in thee is.
Be every passion, feeling, thought,
To Christ in full subjection brought;
Rule thou thyself; let grace divine,
Rule ever in this heart of thine.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.—PROV. iv. 23.

DO I watch, with holy jealousy, over my own heart, guarding with constant vigilance every avenue by which sin might possibly find an entrance? Do I endeavor to keep a conscience void of offence, asking divine aid that I may be successful in doing it? Do I remember that issues of life or death depend upon this keeping, or on the neglect of it? Is it my earnest prayer that God, by his Holy Spirit, would always keep me near to him?

As the virtue of the rich perfume evaporates by degrees, if the bottle containing it is not closely stopped, so the life and power of religion is in danger of vanishing insensibly away, if the heart be not kept with diligence.—SALTER.

Never trust this heart of thine that it will be well ordered, and kept in good frame, if thou carry not always a strong hand and a narrow eye over it. If once thou let go the bridle of watchfulness, it will run out so far that it will be hard to bring it back again.

—J. O. DYKES.

Thou art the light; the sunshine is from thee;
And in thy heart is strength and purity;
There lean our weary hearts; there ends our quest;
For there is perfect love and perfect rest.
Kept by thy power for ever safe are we;
Safe in thy safety, only safe in thee.

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.—JAMES ii. 26.

HAVE I so received Christ Jesus into my heart that the faith which I profess is carried out and evidenced by a holy life? Is my faith a living faith, the mainspring and source of my works; and are my works the clear evidence of the reality of my faith? Do I believe and trust as though all depended on Christ? Do I live as though only a holy life could give a title to heaven? Does my faith lead to holy obedience? Is my obedience the fruit of a living faith?

We are not saved by faith without works, for there is no such faith in Christ. Nor are we saved by works without faith, for no works but those that flow from faith are acceptable to God.—G. W. BETHUNE.

It is an unhappy division that has been made between faith and works. Though in thought I may divide them, just as in the candle I think of both the light and the heat, yet as when the candle is put out, both the light and heat are gone, and neither remains without the other, so it is with faith and works; in the Christian life they are inseparable.—SELDEN.

Let my faith go forth in works;
Let my works my faith fulfill;
All my heart thy Spirit breathe;
All my life but do thy will.
Heart and life to thee be given;
Christ my life; his life my heaven.

*

I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—GEN. xxxii. 26.

ARE my prayers earnest and importunate, like the wrestling of Jacob with God? Is the first and chief desire of my heart that I may have the divine guidance and blessing? Do I seek and desire these, more than any earthly favor or temporal good? Do I still persevere in prayer, even when the answer does not at once come, but is delayed? Can I, and do I feel that God knows what is the best answer to give, and the best time in which to give it?

If thou truly desirest a noble and holy life, and unceasingly prayest to God for it, and if thou continuest constant in this thy desire, it will be granted thee without fail.—ST. BERNARD.

Those who would have the blessing of Christ must be in good earnest and importunate for it, as those that resolve they will have no denial. It is the fervent prayer that is the effectual prayer.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Pray, though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears;
May never repay your pleading;
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears.
An answer, not that which you long for,
But diviner, will come some day;
Though your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive, and watch, and pray.—A. PROCTER.

What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.—JOHN xiii. 7.

WHEN providences seem dark, and the way before me is not plain, do I still rest by faith on the wisdom and goodness of my heavenly Father? Do I bear in mind that this world is not the world of results, but a state of discipline and trial? Looking forward to the future state, am I perfectly satisfied that all will then be made plain? And do I strive now to be found faithful in duty, leaving to the solution of the future all that is mysterious or painful in this earthly state?

Most of our difficulties and perplexities arise from our discussing what belongs to God. He does not reason with us, but replies to our suspicious reasoning by displaying afresh the love of his heart, and the power of his arm.—H. BONAR.

In Providence, as in the Scriptures, we must accept readily whatever is plain; and whatever things are hid from us, we must pass them over, and in faith and patience wait for light—if need be, for the light of eternity.

*

God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold,
And show their fitness, to the waiting heart.
And if, through patient toil, we reach the land,
Where weary feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
Where we shall know and clearly understand,
Then we shall surely say, "God knew the best."

Rejoice with them that do rejoice; weep with them that weep.—ROM. xii. 15.

DO I cultivate the spirit of sympathy toward all, and especially toward those in suffering and affliction? Do I interest myself in the joys and sorrows of others, and do all I can to increase the former, and to soothe and lighten the latter? Do I put away selfishness, and truly rejoice in the prosperity and comfort of all about me? As I have taken the name of Christ upon my lips, am I careful to keep his Spirit in my heart, and to manifest it in my life?

One of the most blessed of all Christianity's lessons for this world is, that we rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. The heart can give what gold cannot purchase. To be full of goodness and kindness and sympathy, is to be a blessing to yourself as well as to others. To joy in another's prosperity is to give content to your own lot; to sympathize with another's grief, is to alleviate or dispel your own.

*

Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold?
Balm wouldst thou gather from the deepest grief?
Pour blessings round thee, like a shower of gold.
'Tis when the rose is wrapped in many a fold,
Close to its heart the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty; not when all unrolled,
Leaf after leaf, its bosom rich and fair,
Breathes freely its perfume throughout the ambient
air.—C. WILCOX.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love.—HEB. vi. 10.

DO I remember that if I have faith, it must show itself in works? Am I working heartily and earnestly for God, and in doing good to men? Do I aim at this from love to him, and in gratitude for all he has done for me? And if at any time I am discouraged or depressed by seeing little or no fruit of my labors, do I draw encouragement from the fact that God does not and will not forget my labors of love if they have been done for him?

The good hope, is the fruitful hope; the true faith, the faith that goes forth in works of obedience to God.

*

Good works constitute a refreshing stream in this world, wherever they are found flowing. And behind them all, if they are genuine, and above them, as their fountain, love will, sooner or later, certainly be found. It is never good works alone, but "love and good works" as a complex whole, which make the fountain and its flowing stream.—ARNOT.

It is thine own, O Lord,
Who toil while others sleep;
Who sow, with loving care,
What other hands may reap;
They lean on thee, entranced,
In calm and perfect rest;
Give us their peace, O Lord,
Divine and ever blest.—A. PROCTER.

I seek not mine own glory.—JOHN viii. 50.

IF even the divine Redeemer could so speak, how much more does it become his followers to cherish the same spirit? Do I avoid both the weakness and the sin of seeking to exalt and glorify self? Rather, in the spirit of humility, do I earnestly aim and endeavor to promote the interests and glory of God? Is his will, his honor, his kingdom, ever in my view? Do I consecrate myself, with all that I am, and have, to their advancement?

Had I the faith of the patriarchs, the zeal of the prophets, the good works of the apostles, and the constancy of the martyrs, I would disclaim all as the ground of dependence, and rely only on free grace. I would count all as but dross, in comparison with the precious death and meritorious righteousness of Christ.

—W. B. SPRAGUE.

He that makes earthly possessions, or honors, or pleasures, the main object of pursuit, seldom obtains his wishes; and even if he does, his enjoyment is marred by anxiety. But the desires of him who delights in the Lord, being in accordance with the divine will, are always granted, and even far exceeded.—W. JAY.

On earth, O God, thou ever lovest best,
To walk with those who truly mourn for sin.
Oh come thou, then, and make thy chosen rest
My broken, humble, contrite soul within;
Dwell, by thy Spirit, in my inmost heart;
Make it thy temple; never thence depart.

Lord, remember me.—LUKE xxiii. 42.

DOES this prayer faithfully echo the desires of my heart? Do I wish and pray that God would remember me in all circumstances: in prosperity, to keep me humble and thankful; in adversity, to sustain and comfort; in temptation, to deliver from evil; in duty, to give me strength; in life, that I may always honor him; in death, that I may be supported, and comforted, and be guided safely through the dark valley to everlasting life in heaven? And at all times, do I remember God, and strive to please him?

If we remember Christ in our life he will not fail to remember us in the hour of death. *

If we are Christians, then are we the sons of God, and God is our Father. He loves us with a father's love; and cares for us with a father's care; and provides for us with a father's wisdom; and protects us with a father's tenderness and power. We should believe his love, and trust his promises, and rely on his guidance, and do all that we can to please and honor him.—J. SMITH.

How blest our years of life would flow,
In faith, and hope, and joyous trust,
Would we but feel, as well as know,
That God is kind as well as just.
In all life's want, in all its woe,
To highest throne, to lowliest sod, -
Help from on high his love doth send.
Our truest, surest friend is God!

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.—PROV. x. 22.

IN all my plans and undertakings, do I seek the blessing of God? Do I make it a point never to do anything in which I cannot ask him to bless me? If he has given me health, or talents, or influence, or wealth, do I endeavor sacredly to use all as his steward, knowing that I must soon give up my account to him? In all that I have and am, do I acknowledge God, and ask his guidance and blessing; enjoying thankfully what he gives, and endeavoring with it to do good to others? —

What a privilege is this, to enjoy God in all things while we have them, and all things in God when they are taken away!

There is nothing we can do, but its complexion for weal or woe depends entirely on what the Lord will make it. It is said of Matthew Henry that he undertook no journey, began no sermon, committed no book to the press, and never apprehended or felt any trouble or difficulty, or began any undertaking, without specially asking for divine assistance and success. And Cornelius Winter never even opened a book without a moment's prayer.—J. HAMILTON.

All that God blesses, is our good;
And all unblest, is ill.
All that seems dark shall brightly shine,
If it be his sweet will.
The meek God raiseth from the dust;
No evil comes to those who trust.

Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?—LUKE xxiv. 32.

DO I prize as I ought the privilege of searching the sacred Scriptures, and of communing with Christian friends as to the great truths and duties they make known? Is not such communion, communion with Christ himself, though we see him not with the bodily eye? What is better fitted to kindle the feelings, and warm the heart and animate the life? In such communion, does not Christ, as of old, often reveal himself to his people?

Be much with Christ, and your face will shine, and all will see that you are his.—BRAMWELL.

Religious instruction, religious conversation, religious communion—do they not always increase religious knowledge, and quicken religious feeling, and lead to religious activity, and bring Christ near to the soul? How should we prize every opportunity for them, and improve them to the utmost.

*

We'll talk of all he said and did,
And suffered for us here below,
The path he marked for us to tread,
And what he's doing for us now.
Thus, as the moments pass away,
We'll love, and wonder, and adore,
And hasten on the glorious day,
When we shall meet to part no more.

—J. NEWTON.

Holding forth the word of life.—PHIL. ii. 16.

IS it my earnest endeavor not only to hold fast, but to hold forth the word of life? Do I not only hold it fast for my own benefit, but hold it forth for the good of others? Do I bear in mind that it is the duty of the Christian not only to work out his own salvation, but so to let his light shine that others may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven? As I believe, so do I speak, and so also do I live?

Wilt thou not stir up all the vigor of grace within thee to do great service for thy Saviour on earth, that thy reward in heaven may be great? Remember that Jesus, the Judge, is coming apace; and the lustre and weight of thy crown shall be according to thy work for him.—HARBAUGH.

Every Christian should be a missionary to extend the knowledge of the gospel he has received, and to lead men to the Saviour whom he has found. As the disciples, of old, went everywhere preaching the gospel, so every disciple now should preach Christ to his fellow-men, that they may be won to him. *

Thou must thyself be true,
If thou the truth wouldest teach;
Thy soul with love be filled, if thou
Another's soul would reach.
It needs the overflowing heart,
To give the lips full speech.
If thou to Christ hast found the way
Lead others to him day by day.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.—1 JOHN ii. 6.

DO I endeavor to be a faithful follower of him whom I call my Lord and Master? Do I cherish his Spirit, and try to imitate his example of perfect obedience? Do I remember that he himself has said, that in keeping his commandments is the great proof that we truly love him? Do I try to walk as he walked, that I may honor him, and that by letting my light shine I may lead others to him?

The strong argument for the truth of Christianity is the true Christian; the man filled with the Spirit of Christ. The best proof of Christ's resurrection is a living Church, which itself is walking in a new life, and drawing life from him who hath overcome death.

—CHRISTLIEB.

The Christian is the world's Bible. Men of the world do not read God's word to find out what is religion. They look to the life and conduct of those who profess to believe it. A holy life is the most powerful preaching. Many a man has been led to Christ by the consistent life of some one of his followers. *

My dear Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in thy word;
But in thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.
Be thou my pattern; make me bear,
More of thy gracious image here;
Then God, the Judge, shall own my name,
Among the followers of the Lamb.—WATTS.

Our sufficiency is of God.—2 COR. iii. 5.

IN every hour of exposure or weakness, do I feel that my sufficiency is in God, and only in him? And if through his grace, I have been enabled to overcome temptation, control appetite, subdue selfish inclination, or to do anything for God's glory, do I give all the praise to him? Do I check self-complacency, and self-reliance, and render thanks to God for his sufficiency and aid which were granted to me in the hour of need? —

Everything is to be found in God by those who for the sake of God are willing to give up everything.—
AUGUSTINE.

God will help not once or twice, but at all times, if we ask him. What then would he have me to do? Only to trust in him, call upon him, and watch and acknowledge his hand. Trust his word, for it is true; call upon him, for he hath promised; watch his hand in the dispensations of providence, for he will do as he has said.—J. SMITH.

Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal word!
From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor and his glad success,
His strength to suffer and his will to serve.
But, oh! thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art, of all thy gifts, thyself the crown.
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee, rich, take what thou wilt away.

—COWPER.

The Lord trieth the hearts.—PROV. xvii. 3.

DO I bear in mind, at all times, that he who tries my heart is omniscient, and that all things are open to his eye? Do I realize that every wrong thought, or feeling, or purpose,—that every allowed or cherished sin, whether great or small, is at once known to him; that nothing escapes his notice? In all my thoughts, plans, words, and deeds, do I remember that I am in God's presence? Does this solemn truth keep me from sinning, and encourage me to all that is good?

Our great Master commands a view, not only of our outward actions, but of the very thoughts of our hearts. And not only so, but we know that he is constantly watching us, not to blame merely if we do wrong, but to prompt, and help, and encourage us. What an incentive to diligence.—VINCENT.

A good conscience is the palace of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the paradise of delight, the standing Sabbath of the saints.—AUGUSTINE.

Search my heart, my actions prove;
Try my thoughts as they arise;
For thy kindness and thy love
Ever are before my eyes.
Keep my soul from all offence;
All my supplications hear;
Let me walk in innocence;
Let me, Lord, thy mercy share.

—W. WRANGHAM.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.—1 COR. x. 13.

DO I feel, with comfort, that though the world and those in it may prove false, yet God is for ever true, and is the sure and unfailing stay of his children? Do I feel, as well as know, that he is wise as well as faithful, and that he knows how to proportion our burdens to our strength? Am I diligent to keep myself out of the way of temptation, remembering that God does not promise strength to those who willfully expose themselves to its power?

Continual comfort and prosperity would be unsafe for us. Continual affliction would be hard upon us. Therefore our gracious Lord appoints us changes. Comforts and trials are interwoven in our dispensations; and so closely, that hardly an hour passes, in which we have not many causes for thankfulness.—
J. NEWTON.

God's children are most triumphant when most tempted; most glorious, when most afflicted; most in God's favor, when least in man's. As their conflicts, so their conquests; as their tribulations, so their triumphs.—SPENCER.

Meek souls there are, who little deem
Their daily strife an angel's theme;
Nor think the cross they take so calm,
May prove, in heaven, a martyr's palm;
That God's own hand, though trials frown,
Is leading to the heavenly crown!

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.—Ps. xxxvii. 7.

IN all circumstances does my soul find its rest in God? Am I reconciled to all that he does, and satisfied with all the allotments of his providence? Do I acquiesce in whatever he appoints, because he, who knows what is right and best, has appointed it? Am I satisfied that he will make all things work for my good, though I do not now see when or how it can be? Do I rest, submissively and confidently, in his wisdom and unfailing love, and in his ceaseless care for my best, my immortal interests?

A patient bearing of what is laid upon us, and a patient expectation of what is further appointed for us, are as much our interest, as they are our duty; for it will make us always easy, and give us a realization of rest in the Lord.—MATTHEW HENRY.

The nearer the soul is to God, the less its perturbations; as the point nearest the centre of the circle, is least subject to motion. Calm and patient trust in him, always gives rest to the soul.

Long did I toil, and knew no earthly rest;
Far did I rove, and found no certain home;
At last I sought them in his sheltering breast,
Who opes his arms, and bids the weary come.
With him I found a home, a rest divine;
And I since then am his, and he is mine.

—H. F. LYTE.

In the day of adversity, consider.—Eccl. vii. 14.

WHEN affliction or trouble comes, do I see the hand of God in it, and feel that it comes with designs of good from on high? Does the thought that it is sent by a loving and unerring Father, who knows what is best, keep me from murmuring or repining? If my plans and hopes are frustrated, do I bow submissively to the divine will, and ask for grace wisely to improve the teachings of God's providence, that they may all lead me nearer to him?

No physician ever weighed out medicine to his patient with half so much exactness and care as God weighs out to us every trial: not one grain too much does he ever permit to be put in the scale.—CECIL.

This may be said of the trials of all God's servants in all ages, that love appoints them, wisdom chooses them, Providence arranges them, promises are provided for them, grace supports under them, and glory shall be the issue of them all.—CADMAN.

What would God have this trial do for me?
What golden fruit lies hidden in its husk?
How shall it nurse my virtue, nerve my will,
Chasten my passions, purify my love,
And make me in some goodly sense like him,
Who bore the cross of evil while he lived,
And hung and bled upon it when he died,
And now in glory wears the victor's crown?

—J. G. HOLLAND.

Exercise thyself, rather, unto godliness.—1 TIM. iv. 7.

DO I endeavor to live not merely a moral, but a truly godly life? Is the glory of God my aim; the will of God, my rule; the Son of God, my dependence; the Spirit of God, my sanctifier, and comforter, and guide, my helper in every duty and from day to day? Do I diligently and prayerfully exercise myself to these ends, studying to know and do the will of God? Do I feel that as to do good, I must be good; so to be good, I must do good? Do I endeavor to be faithful to God, as well as to man?

To live godly, we must know God by the teachings of his Spirit; believe on him as reconciled in Christ; and love him as our heavenly Father. We shall then love his law, and gladly be governed by his commandments. His word will be precious to us; his Sabbaths, delightful; his worship, pleasant; his ordinances, sweet; his service, a joy. In a word, we shall walk holily with God; it will be our meat and drink to do his will; and being no longer our own, but bought with a price, we shall glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his.

—BURDER.

Jesus, thy crowning grace impart;
Bless me with holiness of heart,

That living thus for thee
I may behold thine open face,
And glorify thy saving grace,

And God for ever see!—C. WESLEY.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—JOHN xiii. 17.

HAVE I that well-founded, and satisfying, and abiding happiness, which comes from knowing and doing the will of God? Do I receive his truth in love, and endeavor to obey his commands, and seek to cherish his Spirit, and believe in the wisdom and goodness of his providence, and firmly rely on his promises, and try to live for his glory? If so, have I not the very elements of happiness within me, and how can I do otherwise than rejoice in God, and joy in the rock of my salvation?

Happiness is like manna: it is to be sought from God, and gathered in grains, and enjoyed every day, as we press on in the way to which we are pointed by the divine command. It will not keep; it cannot be accumulated; it is not to be sought in remote places, or out of ourselves; but in our daily path, where, if we walk with God, he will rain it down, as we need it, from heaven.

*

“I hear you have given up all your pleasures,” said a man of the world to a friend who had been converted. “No,” said the other, “I never knew what pleasure was till now; and as I have tried the pleasures both of sin and religion, while you have only tried the former, I ought to be the best judge.”—WISE.

To take a glimpse with’ n the veil,
To know that Christ is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable, divine.—J. NEWTON.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.—Ps. i. 3.

AM I daily growing in the knowledge and love of God? Is my tendency, like that of the tree, ever upward? As the tree is firmly rooted in the earth, so am I rooted and grounded in the faith? As the tree draws life from the air, so do I draw life from the Holy Spirit? As the tree is nourished by the rivers of water, so do I daily receive fresh supplies from the ever-flowing streams of God's mercy and goodness? As the tree brings forth fruit in its season, so do I improve every season, to bring forth fruit to the glory of Christ, my Saviour?

Even the leaf of those who bring forth only the leaves of profession without any good fruit, shall wither. But if the word of God rule in the heart, that will keep the profession green, both to our comfort and credit, and we shall bear much fruit for God.

—MATTHEW HENRY.

The branch is wholly dependent on the vine; and so are we on Christ: it derives all its supplies from the vine; and so should we from Christ. Let us rest on Christ; trust in Christ; look for all to Christ; and so walk in union and constant fellowship with Christ. Thus shall we honor our Saviour, and bring forth fruit for him.

See the trees thine hand hath planted;
Watch them with thy constant care;
Oh let our request be granted,
Make them fruitful; make them fair.
Planted by thine hand, may we,
Each bring forth rich fruit for thee!

The love of Christ constraineth us.—2 COR. v. 14.

UGHT not the Christian's life to be devoted to the service of him who gave his own life that we might live? Does the love of Christ constrain me to make him the great end of my life and conduct? Does it lead me to love his person, to honor his name, to embrace his doctrine, to obey his commands, to promote his cause, to submit to his cross, to love his people, to look forward to his coming? Does it grieve me to see his love slighted? Do I do all that I can to lead others to feel its power?

The great ends of life are best gained by him who in all his conduct is animated by the love of Christ.—MCLEOD.

The more we know of Jesus and his love, the more precious he becomes to us. He is precious in health, but more so in sickness; precious in life, but more so in death; precious in his person, in his blood, in his promises, in his presence here, and will be unspeakably more so in heaven! Holy Spirit, aid me to feel his love; and make him more and more precious to me every day, till I see him as he is!—J. SMITH.

Oh! for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.
Angels, assist our mighty joys;
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told!—WATTS.

As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.
—1 COR. vii. 17.

DO I feel that whatever the circumstances or position in life in which God has placed me, there is the post of duty, and there I am to serve and honor him? Wherever I am, do I endeavor to walk according to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Do I seek for grace to enable me to be faithful as a disciple of the Saviour, and so to live as to commend my faith to others? Am I willing, everywhere, to acknowledge Christ, and to follow him?

Happy are they who dare venture out in the open street with the name of Christ upon their foreheads at a time when many are ashamed of him and hide him, as it were, under their cloaks, as if he were a stolen Saviour.—RUTHERFORD.

A Christian, when he has made a good profession, should so live as to make his profession good. It is a sad thing when one who professes to be carrying a lantern for others, is himself walking in darkness.—PECKHAM.

The Saviour lives! His life is mine;
Then let my life be wholly his.
Rise up, my soul, with power divine,
Tread down the sin that in thee is.
Walk in the light; arise and shine;
The weak his arms of strength entwine.

—A. WARNER.

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.—HEB. x. 38.

DO I feel that it is as truly important to go on in the divine life, as it was to enter it? And if I am not pressing onward, is it not sad evidence that I have never begun the Christian course? Do I guard against the allurements of the world, and the temptations of the adversary, and the deceitfulness of my own heart; and is it my earnest prayer, that I may be kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation?

Backsliding develops itself in indifference to prayer and self-examination; trifling or unprofitable conversation; neglect of public ordinances; shunning the people of God; associating with the world; thinking lightly of sin; neglecting the Bible; ending, if not repented of and forsaken, in a rapid run to perdition.

—BUCK.

Faint not under the perils or trials of the way. The miles to heaven are few and short, and the glorious end will come soon.—RUTHERFORD.

There is no bitterer work than seeking for a departed Christ—departed and gone, because he has been driven away.—POWER.

Oh give me, Lord, the tender heart,
That trembles at the approach of sin;
A godly fear of guilt impart;
Implant and root it deep within.
Oh may thy wondrous love to me,
For ever bind my soul to thee!

Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.—HEB. xii. 14.

DO I bear in mind that the whole course of my life here, is the preparation for what I shall be hereafter; and that without holiness on earth, I cannot expect to be holy or happy in heaven? Do I endeavor, then, by a life of penitence and faith and holy living on earth, to be fitted, through divine grace, to see God in heaven? If justified through Christ, so as to have a title to heaven, do I seek to be sanctified through the truth and by the Holy Spirit, so as to be made fit to enter there?

If here on earth we do not delight in holiness, we have no preparation for that world where God is to be all in all for ever.—MELVILL.

The tree will not only lie as it falls, but it will fall as it leans. And the great question every one should bring home to himself, is, "What is the inclination of my soul? Does it, with all its affections and powers, lean toward God, or away from him?"—GURNEY.

Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lip, nor envious eye,
Can see or taste its bliss.
Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there,
But followers of the Lamb!—WATTS.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.—EPH. iv. 30.

DO I endeavor to be always obedient to the dictates of divine truth, and to listen to the voice of conscience, when it speaks, either as to duty or danger? Am I careful, in these things, not to grieve the Holy Spirit, who is ever seeking to enlighten, and sanctify, and guide, and comfort, all who are striving to be faithful? Do I avoid those worldly allurements, and besetting sins, and evil passions, and unhallowed thoughts, which lead the soul away from God? In all things do I seek to cherish the Spirit of Christ?

To grieve the Holy Spirit, is to shut the door of heaven against one's own entrance.

The sorrow for sin which is the effect of heated feeling only, will surely die away; and that which proceeds from remorse of conscience, is seldom lasting. But the contrition which is lodged in the soul by the Spirit of God, nothing can destroy. No length of time can efface, and no sense of pardon can weaken it.—BRADLEY.

Gracious Spirit, love divine,
Let thy light within me shine;
All my guilty fears remove;
Fill me with thy heavenly love;
Let me never from thee stray;
Keep me in the narrow way;
Fill my soul with joy divine;
Keep me, Lord, for ever thine!

—STOCKER.

Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth.
—JOHN xvii. 17.

DO I seek for sanctification, as well as for justification; to be made holy, as well as to be forgiven; to be cleansed from sin, as well as pardoned for sin? Do I feel that conversion is but the first step in the divine life; and am I prayerfully earnest to grow in grace, and in the experimental knowledge of Christ? Forgetting the things that are behind, am I daily pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?

Christ is the pattern, the sample, the exemplary cause of our sanctification. Holiness in us, is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in the Lord Jesus. As the wax hath line for line from the seal; the child, limb for limb, and feature for feature from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ.—PHILIP HENRY.

The word of God is both the rule and the means of our sanctification. Study it with diligence and prayer if you would grow in grace. *

The light of truth to us display,
And make us know and choose thy way ;
Plant holy fear in every heart,
That we from God may not depart.
Lead us to holiness, the road,
That we must take to dwell with God ;
Lead us to Christ, the living way,
Nor let us from his precepts stray.—S. BROWNE.

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.—PHIL. iv. 4.

DO I realize that all my joy, to be satisfying and permanent, must not only have its source in God, but must terminate in him? Do I feel it to be alike my duty and privilege, to rejoice in God, and to rejoice in him at all times, and in all circumstances: in prosperity, in the fullness of his blessings; and in adversity, that I have still so many mercies, and that even trial and sorrow may work out for me everlasting joy? If I do not rejoice, is it not because I do not live up to the privileges and promises of the gospel?

The joy of the Christian is the joy of heaven, beginning here, and flowing on to its perfection and fullness there.

The true spirit of religion cheers, as well as composes the soul. It banishes, indeed, all levity of behavior, and all vicious and dissolute mirth; but in exchange, it fills the soul with perpetual serenity, uninterrupted cheerfulness, and an habitual inclination to please and do good to others, as well as to be happy in itself.—ADDISON.

The hill of Zion yields,
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.
Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high.—WATTS.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.—1 JOHN iv. 18.

AM I careful to draw the distinction between the fear of reverence, and the fear of apprehension and dread? Do I feel that the former is the very first element of religion, while the latter arises from a sense of sin unpardoned, and is fitted to alarm the soul? Have I that holy fear and reverence for God which leads me to honor him, and which is consistent with the full assurance of his love? And if I love him, and feel that he loves me, may I not well rejoice and triumph in his love?

The fear of God casts out all other fears, and brings quiet and peace where they brought trouble.—
LEIGHTON.

The devils, we are told, believe and tremble; but our part is to believe and not tremble, but love. It is hard to convince some that nothing short of this can be true Christian faith. So, because they are somewhat terrified by the thought of God, they fancy they believe, though their hearts are far away from him—HARE.

Thee will I love, my strength, my tower,
My hope, my life, my joy, my crown;
Thee will I love with all my power,
Supremely love—love thee alone.
Love's sacred flame, a heavenly fire,
Shall ever glow with pure desire,
My heart from self and sin set free,
A holy temple, Lord, for thee.

In his favor is life.—Ps. xxx. 5.

DO I desire, above all things, to have the favor of God, and to be assured, by faith, that I am one of his children? Do I endeavor, by the aid of his Holy Spirit, so to order my life, that the full sunlight of his favor may continually shine in upon my soul? If the light of his countenance is at any time withdrawn and hidden from me, do I prayerfully seek out the reason, and endeavor so to live as to be assured that his promises are mine?

God's favor must be sought in time, if we would enjoy it either in time or eternity. *

Just as the sun gleams over the palace, and into the cottage, flushing alike with its splendor the council-chamber of the monarch and the kitchen of the peasant, so religion illuminates at once the heaven of our hopes, and the earth of our cares. Secularities become hallowed; toil brightens with the smile of God; business becomes as the air of heaven, a means of life and growth to us; light from God comes through it to us; and glances from us, go through it up to God.

—COLEY.

Show me thy face; the heaviest cross
Will then seem light to bear;
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.
With such light feet the years will fleet,
Life will seem brief as blest;
Till I have laid my burden down,
And entered into rest.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you, also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.—2 COR. vi. 1.

HAVE I indeed received the grace of God in my soul? And knowing its infinite value, as a worker together with God do I labor for the good of others around me, endeavoring to lead them to a Christian life? Am I earnest, diligent, patient, prayerful in the work God has given me to do, improving the present to the utmost, because the future is not sure? Do I expect as well as pray for a blessing on every effort to do good?

If you would have great grace, undertake great things for Christ.—PAYSON.

Blessed are they who shall see the day of Christ's coming glory; but more blessed are they who contribute to its approach.—SECKER.

Every day is a golden opportunity which the Father of mercies has put into our hands for moral and religious purposes, that we may ourselves be advancing in the divine life, and doing good to others.—BRUCE.

O Christ! thou art my king,
My king, henceforth, alone;
My heart, my life, to thee I bring,
For I am all thine own.

Let this my joy, my life, my life-work be,
To die to self, to live my Lord, to thee!

—TERSTEEGEN.

He is our peace.—EPH. ii. 14.

HAVE I come by faith to the Saviour, and accepted that peace which he purchased for me on the cross? Have I, through his grace, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, that sense of pardoned sin which only can give peace? Do I look for peace and comfort to any other source than to him? Knowing that he is both able and willing to forgive sin, why, if I trust him, should I not take the full comfort of the peace that he gives to his people?

Peace is put for reconciliation and love; and the peace bequeathed by Christ, is peace with God, peace with one another, and peace in our own hearts. The last seems especially meant; a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of our justification with God.—M. HENRY.

Where the peace is that Christ gives, all the trouble and disgust of the world cannot disturb it. All outward distress to such a mind, is but as the rattling of hail upon the tiles to him who sits within the house at a sumptuous banquet.—LEIGHTON.

Quiet as the peaceful river,
Quiet as the wind-hushed seas,
In Jehovah trusting ever,
We are kept in perfect peace.
This our constant heart consoleth—
So we never are afraid—
That our heavenly Father ruleth,
And on him our trust is stayed.

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—MATT. ix. 13.

HAVE I seen and felt myself to be one of those lost and helpless sinners whom Christ came to seek and save? Do I feel that but for his grace, I have no hope either of being or doing good, or of being saved at last in heaven? Is my obedience to his will the fruit of my faith in him, and of my love to him? Do I feel that the holiest life can give no title to heaven; and do I look to good works as the evidence and offspring of faith, and not as giving a claim to the divine favor?

Are you busy and painstaking in the attempt to work out a righteousness of your own? Leave that loom, and your vows and promises which are but gossamer thread. The white linen that robes the saint, the raiment meet for thy soul and approved of God, was woven on the cross, and there it was dyed in the blood of the Son of God.—GUTHRIE.

Good works do not make a Christian; but one must be a Christian to do good works. The tree bringeth forth the fruit, not the fruit the tree. None is made a Christian by works, but by Christ; and being in Christ, he brings forth fruit for him.—LUTHER.

Not what I am, O Lord, but what thou art,
That, that alone can be my soul's true rest;
Thy love, not mine, bids fear and doubt depart,
And stills the tempest of my tossing breast;
Feeling my lost estate, I list thy call,
And find in thee my life, my hope, my all!

Come; for all things are now ready.—LUKE xiv. 17.

AS the blessed Saviour has prepared the feast of salvation, have I accepted the invitation to it? Or am I postponing it to some future season? Am I so living now, that whenever called away, I may be prepared to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb? For all the offered blessings of the gospel am I devoutly thankful? Do I endeavor so to improve them all, that at last I shall be welcomed to the blessed and endless fellowship of heaven?

Those who are satisfied with the world for their portion and seek not for happiness in God, feel no need for accepting the gospel invitation, and are in no uneasiness about their souls. But those who labor and are heavy laden are invited, and they come.—
MATTHEW HENRY.

You are guilty, and only Christ can forgive; sinful, and only Christ can cleanse; weak, and only Christ can strengthen; wandering, and only Christ can safely guide. There is wrath, and only Christ can deliver. You are lost, and only Christ can save. Come to him just as you are, poor, needy, naked, empty, wretched; only come, and he will receive you, and be your portion for ever.—MASON.

Long have we roamed in want and pain;
Long have we sought thy rest in vain;
'Wilder'd in doubt, in darkness lost,
Long have our souls been tempest tost.
Now at thy feet our sins we lay;
Turn not, O Lord, thy guests away.—HEBER.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.—Ps. xxxii. 1.

AM I one of those blessed ones who having repented of sin, and renounced all self-dependence, have come to Christ, and accepted him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour? Have I found in his atonement, a sure ground of hope; and in his righteousness, an ample robe and covering for my soul? Do I find in him the rest and peace which he freely offers to all his true disciples? Has my repentance led me to avoid sin; and my faith led me to works of holy obedience?

A good conscience is a continual feast; and a mind at peace through Christ, is the antepast of heaven.—
BISHOP REYNOLDS.

Justification includes the forgiveness of sin through Christ's passive obedience, and the imputation of righteousness through his active obedience.—GREW.

Go where you will, and your soul will find no rest but in Christ's bosom. Inquire for him; come to him, and rest you on Christ, the Son of God. I sought him and found him; and I found in him all I can wish or want.—RUTHERFORD.

Mine is the sin, but thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace;
Thy blood, thy righteousness, O Lord, my God.
My hope, my strength, my happiness I find,
In thee, O blessed Saviour, all combined!

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.—Ps. cxix. 18.

IS my knowledge of divine truth, experimental? Do I not only find in the Bible the teachings of infinite wisdom, revealing truths that no mere finite mind could ever have discovered, but am I so enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that I feel, in my own experience, the fitness of these truths to my own case, and see them beaming with the goodness and mercy of their divine Author? The more I study the Scriptures, the more do I love them? The more do I make them the man of my counsel, and the guide of all my conduct?

Never do we gain the most vivid and realizing views of divine truth, but through the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. Under that influence, we get new views of old truths; strong views of truths which before made little impression; near views of truths which have hitherto seemed distant; realizing views of truths which have only been themes of cold speculation; and joyous and transporting views of truths, which have been regarded with indifference and luke-warmness, or with a hesitating and joyless faith.—
G. SPRING.

The Spirit's light, doth to the sight,
 Unfold the truth divinely given;
Of joy the source, of peace the course,
 The joy, the peace, the hope of heaven!
It comes, and lo! a precious light,
 Beams in the word, divinely bright,
 And gives it sanctifying force!

Whoso shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.—MATT. x. 32.

DO I feel it to be a duty, not only to believe on Christ, but to confess him before men ? If unwilling or ashamed to acknowledge him as my Saviour now, how can I expect that he will acknowledge me, as one of his followers and redeemed ones, before the assembled universe, at the final judgment ? What is there in the person, doctrines, service, or friendship of Christ, of which any one should be ashamed ; in which all should not glory ?

It is wonderful what strength and boldness of purpose and energy of will come from the feeling that we are in the way of duty.—J. FOSTER.

Christ would have us decided. He would have us willing witnesses ; living epistles, known and read of all men. He asks the whole heart ; the whole purpose ; the whole life : and he well deserves them all. If we are ashamed of his name, or his cause, or his service, or his people here, he will be ashamed of us hereafter.

Ashamed of Jesus ! yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away ;
No tear to wipe ; no good to crave ;
No fears to quell, no soul to save.
Till then—nor is my boasting vain—
Till then I boast a Saviour slain !
And oh may this my glory be,
That Christ is not ashamed of me !

—J. GRIGG.

Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.—JOEL ii. 13.

IS my heart sincerely penitent and truly humbled on account of sin? Is my sorrow less on account of the consequences to myself, than because my sins have violated God's holy law, and grieved so patient and loving and long-suffering a Saviour? Do I remember that God is not satisfied with mere words; that he requires a broken and contrite spirit—a heart-repentance, evidenced by a loving, obedient life?

How long-suffering and patient is God with sinners; how slow to punish; how unwilling to strike! If there be but a hope of recovery, how many pauses doth he make on his way to justice?—SPENCER.

Sorrow for sin only because it exposes to punishment, is not true repentance. He that sorrows after a godly sort, would not sin, though escape from consequences were possible: for his heart is changed; he is renewed in the spirit of his mind; he loves God and his service, and has lost his relish for the pleasures of sin.—WALKER.

Oh, for a heart to praise my God!
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels thy blood,
So freely shed for me;
A heart in every thought renewed,
And filled with love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine!—C. WESLEY.

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.—MARK ix. 24.

DO I receive implicitly all the teachings of Christ, and trust implicitly all his offers and promises, venturing my all on him for time and eternity? If my faith is weak, do I pray for its increase? Do I look away from my own weakness, and narrow views, and occasional doubts and fears, to the infinite power and truthfulness and the rich and abundant promises of Christ, that by these my faith may be strengthened, and my confidence and trust be made sure?

Difficulties, whether as to truth or providence, which we reckon on meeting in our path, strangely but effectually vanish when we are seeking Christ. An unseen Hand has cleared them away before we come, just as the mists are dispersed by the rising of the sun.

What was said of the Israelites, that “they could not enter in because of unbelief,” may be said of many of our prayers, that they cannot enter heaven because they are not put up in faith.—SALTER.

The best way to remove doubts and fears, is, to have Christ within you. Learn his life; learn to trust him more and love him more; become identified with him, and all your doubts will disappear.—C. HODGE.

That childlike faith that asks not sight,
Waits not for wonder, or for sign,
Believes, because it loves aright,
Shall see things greater, things divine.

—KEBLE.

Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise.—MAL. iv. 2.

HAVE I found Christ, to my soul, what the sun is to the visible world—light to disperse its darkness, and to give life and health and joy? Do I always desire and seek that this divine light may shine into my soul, to disperse the darkness of ignorance and prejudice, and to lead me to clear views of truth and duty? Do I seek to lead others to this light? Is it my prayer and effort that it may shine to all mankind?

The soul that truly fears and loves God will always have light and strength and peace from on high.—J. MASON.

It is not toiling, but believing, that brings rest and joy, and peace. It is not doing or suffering, but simply believing that Christ has suffered and done. It is not waiting, but believing now. It is not seeking to make one's self better, but coming in all our sinfulness, that Christ may make us so. It is through him we come to know the love of God; and in this is rest and peace.—R. NEWTON.

All my trust on thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart;
Rise to all eternity.—C. WESLEY.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful, also, in much.—LUKE xvi. 10.

DO I realize, as I should, the importance of little things, in their bearing on character, and attainments, and usefulness? Though it seem but a little duty, do I endeavor to honor God in it? Though it seem but a little temptation, do I shun it as the gateway to hell? Though it may be but little that I can do, do I seek to please and serve God in it, remembering his own lesson, that we are not to despise the day of small things?

He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.—*ECCLESIASTICUS.*

Life is made up of little things. He who travels over a continent must go step by step. He who writes a book must do it sentence by sentence; he who learns a science must master it fact by fact, and principle after principle. Of what is the happiness of our life made up? Of little courtesies, little kindnesses, pleasant words, genial smiles, loving wishes and good deeds. One in a million, once in a lifetime, may do a heroic action. But the little things that make up our life, come every day and every hour.

Aid us to strive, with earnest soul,
Thy work to do, though small the measure,
Knowing it part of one great whole,
All tending to our highest goal,
Thy perfect will and pleasure!

In all things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us.—ROM. viii. 37.

DO I feel that in Christ, and in the promised aid of his Holy Spirit, is my only hope of overcoming the world, and self, and sin? Does the love of Christ animate me, and his sympathy encourage me, and his promise assure me, and his Spirit strengthen and comfort me, so that I faint not in adversity, and endure afflictions, and fight manfully the good fight of faith? Do I feel that I am conquering, and that in the end I shall triumphantly and for ever conquer through the grace of Christ?

There are depths of love in Christ beyond all that we have seen. Therefore dig deep, and labor, and take pains for him, and set by as much time for him as you can. He will be won by labor.—RUTHERFORD.

Deeper than the love of home, or of kindred, or of rest and recreation, or of life itself, is the love of Jesus. His love to us will ever sustain and keep us from falling; and our love to him will constrain us to be faithful to the end, so that at last the crown of life may be ours.—J. HAMILTON.

But fainter than the pole star's ray
Before the noon-tide blaze of day,
Is all of love that man can know,
And all in angels' hearts can glow,
Compared, O Lord of hosts, with thine,
Unwearied, fathomless, divine!

Leaning upon her beloved.—SOL. SONG viii. 5.

DO I feel that the ways of sin are like a wilderness? And by repentance and faith have I come up from, and out of it, leaning on Christ as the One supremely loved? Do I realize that there is no escape from sin but through him? Do I lean on him by faith and in love; not trusting to my own righteousness; not leaning to my own understanding; not relying on my own strength; not following my own guidance; but in, and for all that I need, looking only to him?

Lean upon Jesus for strength. He can increase your faith, and hope, and love, and strengthen your heart for every burden, and trial, and temptation. Lean on him; for he loves you to link your feebleness to his almighty, and to have you avail yourself of his grace.

Remember, you are not a tree, that can live or stand alone. You are only a branch. And it is only while you abide in Christ, as the branch in the vine, that you will flourish, or even live.—MCCHEYNE.

True wisdom is in leaning
On Jesus Christ, our Lord;
True wisdom is in trusting
His own life-giving word.
True wisdom is in living
Near Jesus every day;
True wisdom is in walking,
Where he shall lead the way.

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, . . . I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.—ISA. lvii. 15.

DOES the sense of my sinfulness and weakness, keep me, at all times, humble before God? Do I feel my insufficiency and unworthiness; and that but for restraining grace, I should be constantly sinning, as but for pardoning grace, I should be condemned for ever? Do I pray for light and wisdom from on high, that I may fully know myself, and that at the same time I may know the richness of the grace that is in Christ Jesus? Do all my hopes rest on him?

It is the peculiar province and glory of gospel grace to humble every believer in the dust, and from gratitude and love to produce the best obedience.—VENN.

Not all the devils in hell, nor all the temptations of the world, can hurt that man who keeps himself humble and depending on Christ. As Christ humbled himself to honor our nature, we should humble ourselves to honor his name.—J. MASON.

The lowly spirit God hath consecrated,
As his abiding rest;
And angels by the patriarch's tent have waited,
When kings had no such guest.
The dew that never wets the lofty mountain,
Falls in the valley free;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert fountain,
But barren sand the sea.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2 COR. v. 17.

HAVE I, in penitence for sin and faith in the only Redeemer, become a new creature in Christ Jesus? Have I not only a new name, but a new heart, and a new nature? Have old thoughts, old principles, old aims, old desires, old practices, old habits passed away? By divine grace have I so been regenerated, that the controlling love of sin has been taken away, and that now it is my chief and earnest desire to know and do the will of God?

There are three things which the true Christian desires with respect to sin: justification, that it may not condemn; sanctification, that it may not reign; and glorification, that it may not be.—CECIL.

The mere outward reformation of morality, differs as much from regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as whitewashing an old rotten house differs from taking it down, and building a new one in its room.—TOPLADY.

Finish, Lord, thy new creation,
Pardoned, holy, may we be;
Let us know thy full salvation;
Find our highest joys in thee.
Take away our love of sinning;
Fill us with a Saviour's love;
Let us serve thee without ceasing,
Till we reach our rest above!

Praise him according to his excellent greatness.—

Ps. cl. 2.

DO I endeavor to see God, as the Psalmist did, in all his works and ways: in his own character, in the sanctuary, and in all his works both of providence and grace? Do I acknowledge, and honor, and praise him in all that he is and does? Do I habitually feel my dependence on him for all that I have and am? With devout thankfulness do I trace all my mercies to him? In humble gratitude do I devote my life to his service?

God has given us four books: the book of Grace, the book of Nature, the book of the World, and the book of Providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books. It does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them.—CECIL.

The presence of God's glory is in heaven; of his power, on earth; of his justice, in hell; of his grace, with his people. If he deny us his powerful presence, we fall into nothing; if he deny us his gracious presence, we fall into sin; if he deny us his merciful presence, we fall into hell; if we are faithful in doing his will, we shall for ever enjoy his glorious presence in heaven.—J. MASON.

I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures!—WATTS.

None of us liveth to himself.—ROM. xiv. 7.

WHAT is the end and aim of my life? Is it self or God? Have I learned to deny myself, and to live for the happiness and welfare of others? Do I remember that my influence for good or evil, will be felt more or less by those about me, and by others, perhaps, long after I have gone to the unseen world? Do I always bear in mind that the great business of the Christian's life is not to seek to please himself, but to please God?

The testimony of a holy life is a still more veritable and impressive one, than even that of a happy death.

—J. A. JAMES.

A holy life has a voice. It speaks when the tongue is silent, and is either a constant attraction, or a continual reproof.—HINTON.

If you do not recognize the claims of God to your body, soul, spirit, time, talents, influence, wealth, to all that you have and are, you cannot be his disciple.—ADAM.

One of the purest and most refined pleasures in this world, is that of doing good to others.—M. HENRY.

Largely thou givest, gracious Lord;
Largely thy gifts should be restored.
Freely thou givest; and thy word
Is "Freely give;"
He only who forgets to hoard,
Has learned to live.—KEBLE

His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain.—1 COR. xv. 10.

DO I feel that in myself by nature I have no merit or worthiness before God? And if there be any good in me, do I ascribe it entirely to divine grace, acknowledging that it comes only from God? Does this conviction make and keep me humble? Do I prayerfully seek, and endeavor to improve in the grace thus bestowed upon me, that it may not be in vain, either to myself or others?

As John Newton, in his old age, read the expression, “By the grace of God, I am what I am,” he paused a moment, and then uttered this affecting soliloquy: “I am not what I ought to be; ah! how imperfect and deficient: not what I wish to be; I abhor that which is evil, and would cleave to that which is good: not what I hope to be; soon I shall put off mortality, and with it all sin and imperfection! But though I am not what I ought to be, or what I wish to be, or what I hope to be, yet I can truly say I am not what I once was, the slave of sin and Satan; and with the apostle I can thankfully say, ‘By the grace of God, I am what I am!’”

All that I was, my sin, my guilt,
My death, was all my own:
All that I am I owe to thee,
My gracious God alone.
My faith, my hopes, my joys depend
On Christ alone, the sinner’s Friend!

Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.—1 TIM. vi. 12.

DO I realize that the Christian life is indeed a warfare, and that there is no cessation from the conflict here on earth? Am I watchful against self, and sin, and the world, and the great adversary of souls? Do I endeavor not only to hold back the powers of evil, but to extend the victories of truth and holiness? Knowing how weak I am of myself, do I put on the whole armor of God, and keep near the great Captain of salvation, and in his strength strive to be faithful unto death?

What Dr. Arnold said about the class of young men who professed their sentimental admiration of virtue, applies well to older persons: “Commend me to those that not only love God, but who also hate the devil.”

There is no fighting on a quagmire. Faith furnishes the only solid and safe ground on which we can contend. Faith clothes us with the whole armor of God, and connects us with the Captain of our salvation, without whom we can do nothing, but through whose strength we can do all things.—W. JAY.

Soldier of Christ! arise!
And put your armor on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son.
Strong is the Lord of hosts,
And in his mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts,
Is more than conqueror!

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.—Ps. xxxvii. 5.

WHEN providences seem dark, and the prospects of the future clouded, then, in patient and submissive faith, do I commit my ways to the Lord, and quietly wait for light from on high? Do I bear in mind the blessed assurance of the Saviour, that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter? Though clouds and darkness may be about me, do I endeavor to look beyond them to the Sun of righteousness, knowing that in due time its beams will shine forth, and every way be made plain?

In all circumstances let faith and patience have their perfect work, and they will bring forth celestial fruits.—G. MACDONALD.

We all meet with thorns and briars in the pathway of life. We are liable to be disappointed, fretted, or saddened, and to see more or less of strange things and trying occurrences, and providences that sorely task our faith and trust, as we journey onward. To keep right with ourselves and with God in them all, we need a full supply of the rare virtue that can always both say and feel, "*God is wiser than I!*"

God's ways seem dark; but, soon or late
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay;
The good can well afford to wait.
Look forward, then, with faith sublime;
God's future is both grand and great;
The safe appeal of truth to time
Is answered in the heavenly state!

Holding faith, and a good conscience.—1 TIM. i. 19.

DO I realize that an intelligent faith is the only sure foundation of a good conscience; and that conscience, when enlightened and faithful, is as the voice of God himself; and that obedience to its dictates, is the way of duty, and safety, and happiness? By always harkening to its voice, do I encourage it to be prompt and faithful in speaking? By the prayerful study of God's word do I seek to have my conscience divinely enlightened, so that I may always safely obey its voice?

As the sun-dial cannot make known the hour when the sun does not shine upon it, so conscience is not a safe guide to duty unless enlightened by God's word.

*

Conscience is the true vicar of Christ in the soul; a prophet in its information; a monarch in its peremptoriness; a priest in its blessings or anathemas, according as we obey or disobey it.—J. NEWMAN.

Keep your conscience tender—tender as the eye that closes its lid against an atom of dust, or as the sensitive plant which shrinks and shuts its leaves not merely at the rude touch of a finger, but at the breath of a moth.

O conscience! conscience! man's most faithful friend, Him thou canst comfort, cheer, relieve, defend: But if he will thy friendly checks forego, Thy voice is terror—thou his deadliest foe!—CRABBE.

Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.—HEB. xiii. 5.

DO I endeavor to cherish, habitually, a cheerful and contented spirit; and does my contentment spring from a childlike trust in God's providence, and the assurance that all its allotments are ordered in wisdom and goodness? Do I dwell more on the blessings I possess, than on those I have not? Am I rather thankful for what I have, than dissatisfied that I have no more? Is my constant reliance on the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"?

In whatsoever state I am, I first look up to heaven, and remember that my chief business here is to get there. Then I look abroad on the world, and see how many there are more unhappy than myself. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, and where all my cares must end, and that I have no cause to repine.

Happiness consists not in possessing much, but in being content with what we possess. He who wants little has always enough.—ZIMMERMAN.

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor;
For some that have abundance at their will,
Have not enough, but want in greatest store;
While other that hath little, asks no more,
But in that little is both rich and wise;
For wisdom is most riches!—SPENCER.

Give us day by day our daily bread.—LUKE xi. 3.

DO I realize, habitually, that I am dependent on God for everything, not only for the knowledge of truth, and the offer of salvation, but for every breath I draw, and for the raiment that clothes, and the food that sustains and nourishes me? Do I bear in mind that this dependence is constant, extending to every moment of my being? Do I daily seek for daily blessings? Every day am I thankful for them? Do I see the hand of my heavenly Father in them all, and endeavor to improve them all to his glory?

It is a blessed and most comforting promise which Christ has given, that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added thereto." As day by day he fed his people in the wilderness with manna from heaven, so day by day he will surely give us our daily bread, if we do but serve him. As a sure ground of dependence, I would rather have God's providence for my inheritance, than all the riches the world could give. *

"Day by day," the manna fell :
Oh, to learn the lesson well !
Still by constant mercy fed,
Give us, Lord, our daily bread.
"Day by day," the promise reads,
Daily strength for daily needs ;
Daily thou our task dost give ;
Day by day to thee we live !—J. CONDER.

I die daily.—1 COR. xv. 31.

IS my warfare against sin a daily and hourly warfare, carried on in humble dependence on God, through the offered aids of the Holy Spirit? Do I take to myself, for the conflict, the whole armor of God; the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God? Do I carry on the contest with earnest prayer and constant watchfulness? Do I seek to be not only dead to sin, but alive to God and his service?

Daily remembrance of God is the source of daily obedience to God.—J. MASON.

To the Christian the little events of daily life tend wonderfully to his sanctification, though he may not know it at the time. This discharge of duty, this trial of patience, this denial of self, this loss, or suffering, or affliction, each, like the finishing strokes of the sculptor, here strikes off an excrescence, and there brings out a beauty of form or feature, till at last the work is completed, and the finished image is prepared for the upper temple.

*

Father, help me every hour,
Faithfully to walk with thee;
Mine the life, through thine the power,
Working grace divine in me.
Let thy strength in me appear;
Heaven's own light upon me shine;
All around me feel thee near;
And the glory, Lord, be thine!

We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.—HEB. ii. 1.

DO I feel that conversion is but the first step in the divine life, and that the only way of duty or safety, is, to press on in the knowledge of truth, and in the way of obedience? Do I endeavor not merely to hold fast the profession of my faith without wavering, but to grow in activity, and hope, and holiness, and comfort? Do I seek to keep divine truth continually before me, and by it to regulate all my thoughts, and words, and actions?

What evidence have I that I love the truth, if I do not keep it continually in my thoughts? What proof that I have an obedient spirit, if I am not living an obedient life? What assurance that Christ died for me, if I am not living for him? *

There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, to retain grace, and to increase grace, as always to be found before God, earnest and watchful in the divine life. Happy are we if our hearts are replenished with three fears: a fear lest grace received should not be real; a greater fear lest grace should be lost; and the greatest fear of all lest grace should not steadily grow and increase.

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my soul with joy;
That silent, constant thought shall be
That all my hopes are fixed on thee,
On thee, my God, on thee!

To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.—JAMES iv. 17.

DO I realize that omissions may as truly be sins, as commissions; and that for both we are to give account at the judgment? Do I bear in mind that those who do not the good they know they ought to do, and those who do the evil they ought not to do, are alike guilty, and will alike be condemned? Do I seek to have my conscience rightly informed and taught by the word of God, and then to follow its dictates? Do I always seek to know and do what is right?

Sins of commission are the usual punishment for sins of omission. He that leaves a duty, may well fear that he will be left to commit a crime.—GURNALL.

We may lose heaven by neutrality, as well as by hostility;—by wanting oil to our lamps, as well as by taking poison. The unprofitable servant will as surely be punished as the disobedient and rebellious servant. Undone duty will undo the soul.—BOWES.

The last words of the excellent and industrious archbishop Usher were, “Lord, in special forgive me my sins of omission.”

Omit no duty; ever pray and work;
Say from the heart thy will be done, and then
Go forth and do it. Life, if rightly lived,
Is one long orison. All faculties,
Employed as God would have them, are but steps
Upon the stairs by which we climb to heaven!

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
—JOHN vii. 37.

HAVE I accepted this gracious and unreserved invitation? When the pardon is so full and free, and the salvation so great, why should any one refuse or delay to accept it?—Am I willing and now ready to be saved in Christ's own way, through his atoning death, putting away sin by repentance, relying on him by faith, consecrating myself for time and eternity to him? As all things on God's part are ready, am I ready to accept them?

The Father is ready to accept us; the Son to intercede for us; the Spirit to sanctify us; the promises are ready as wells of water for supply. Is all this ready, and shall we be unready? Is all this preparation made for us, and shall we be unthankful?—MATTHEW HENRY.

If we put off repentance another day, we have another day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in. God has promised pardon on our repentance, but he has not promised life till we repent.—T. SCOTT.

Wondrous love that brought salvation!

Wondrous grace to sinners shown!

Heaven is wrapt in contemplation

Of his love, whom men disown!

Oh! my soul! wilt thou disown him?

Wilt thou not, my heart, enthrone him?

—RUSSELL.

I will meditate in thy precepts.—Ps. cxix. 15.

DO I not merely read, but carefully and prayerfully study the word of God, comparing text with text, that I may know clearly the divine character and will, and the way of duty and salvation? Do I endeavor to make all its teachings practical, bringing them home to my own case, striving, every day, to become wiser and better through the divine instructions? Do I bring everything to the test of God's word, believing whatever it teaches, and doing whatever it commands?

The most learned, acute, and diligent student, cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore. New light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct the conduct, and illustrate the work of God, and the ways of men. And he will, at last, leave the world, confessing, that the more he studied the Scriptures, the more he saw his own ignorance, and their inestimable value.—WALTER SCOTT.

Oh! that thy statutes, every hour,
Might dwell upon my mind;
Thence I derive a quickening power,
And daily peace I find.
To meditate thy precepts, Lord,
Shall be my sweet employ;
My soul shall ne'er forget thy word;
Thy word is all my joy.—WATTS.

Love not the world.—1 JOHN ii. 15.

HAVE I that new heart, and that new spirit, which lead me to find my highest enjoyment in God? Is my understanding enlightened, my conscience quickened, my affections purified and sanctified, my will in all things subordinate to the will of God? Has a higher love expelled the love of the world from my soul, or so broken its power that it is ever kept in its right place? Do I use the world as not abusing it, remembering how soon it will pass away?

To have a portion in the world, is a mercy; to have it for our portion would be ruin. The great use of this world is to make sure of the next.—J. MASON.

This world is but a school and training place for eternity. I will use it only as the pilgrim doth the hostleries and conveniences of the way, to speed me on my journey, and give the refreshment and strength I need for my pilgrimage. I will make the world but a stepping stone to heaven; not a millstone about my neck, to sink me down to hell.

*

The world is beauteous, like the rainbow bright,
And if, like that, it point our eyes to heaven,
And whisper of the promise, it is well.
But if deluded, like the silly child,
We seek to grasp, and feed ourselves upon it,
It will but mock our hope, and lure us far
From truth and duty, joy and lasting peace,
And so from heaven!

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—JOHN xvi. 20.

AMID the many sorrows and trials and anxieties of life, do I bear in mind this precious assurance and promise of the blessed Saviour? Do I endeavor so to improve by all the dispensations of his providence, as more and more to cherish that spirit and temper of heart with which Christ delights to dwell? Does sorrow lead me nearer to the Saviour? Do I acknowledge his hand and his love in it? Is every sorrow training me to a higher spirituality, and for eternal joy?

Trials and sorrows make us feel our dependence, and work in us tenderness of spirit and humble submission to the will of God. They are the medicine that God sees we need, and that with his own hand he weighs out to us; and they are for the healing of the soul.

“All sorrow ought to be *home-sickness*,” says a German poet. It ought to fill Christ’s pilgrim-band with longings after rest in his likeness and bosom. All the trials and troubles of this life are but the active ministers of God, ordained and employed by him to discipline his people into independence of this world, and into a ripeness for immortality—H. DARLING.

The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks by sorrow made;
Stronger by trial, wiser men become,
As they draw nearer their eternal home.
Weaned from this world, a brighter they descry,
And press with firmer step to joys on high!

I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.—ISA. xliii. 19.

IF God, in his providence, leads me into the wilderness of trial, am I content to follow his guidance, knowing that he is with me, and will make plain the way to the rest beyond? Do I feel that I shall wander if I do not look to him for direction; that I shall perish with hunger if I am not fed from on high; that my thirst can never be quenched but from the living waters that he causes to flow? Are all my steps guided by him?

No temporal blessing is too great to expect from a God whose love was so infinite as to give his own Son for the salvation of mankind.—SAURIN.

Every event of life has meaning to those, who, in the simple trust of a childlike faith, give themselves up to the leadings and guidance of God's providence. No wind can blow wrong; no event be mistimed; no result be disastrous. If in all things God is caring for our inward and eternal life, nothing can occur which is not for our good.

God doth not leave his own;
The night of weeping for a time may last,
Then, when all tears are past,
His going forth shall as the morning shine,
The sunrise of his favor shall be thine;
He will not leave his own.

Be not high-minded, but fear.—ROM. xi. 20.

DC I prayerfully watch against trusting too much to my own strength or good purposes? Do I realize that a holy fear is the best safeguard against self-confidence and high-mindedness, and that he who so fears, is most sure to stand fast in the divine strength? Do I bear in mind that God will ever keep in safety those who live near to him, and will never fail those who put their trust in him? Is my great fear that I may be negligent, and false to my duty and to him?

All God's children have received God's Spirit, whereby they are made humble, believing, holy, and watchful: humble, as regards their sins; believing in regard to Christ; holy in regard of their conscience, and watchful in their effort to keep all God's commandments.—PAYSON

I charge you, be clothed with humility. Let Christ increase, but man decrease. Oh! for such close communion with God, that soul, body, head and heart may all shine with divine brilliancy! But oh for a holy ignorance of their shining!—MCHEYNE.

Oh, for a lowly, contrite heart,
Believing true and clean!
Which neither life nor death can part,
From Him that dwells within.
A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine.—C. WESLEY.

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.—HEB. xii. 11.

DO I realize that all the afflictions and trials of life are sent by God, and that each has its definite errand and object, and is directed by him where to go, whom to touch, what to do, and what end to accomplish? Do I receive the divine chastisements as coming from the heavenly Father? Do they draw me nearer to him? Do I find that they work in me submission, and patience, and experience, and hope, and trust, and so yield to me the peaceable fruits of righteousness?

The soul that is destined to have no other support but God himself, must pass through the strongest trials.

One great purpose of all affliction is to bring us to the everlasting arms, that we may know the strength and peace of finding them underneath us, and be held up, and lifted, and carried along by them. When we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in God.—
PAYSON.

God sends earth's bitter, that heaven's sweet,
Earth's bitter o'er, may sweeter taste,
As Canaan did to Israel's feet,
After the desert waste.
Like them, before us, in our ways,
We view the fountains and the palms,
And drink, and raise our voice in praise,
Singing our thankful psalms.—FORD.

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest.—HEB. v. 11.

DO I so find my rest in Christ on earth, as to be every day preparing for rest with him in heaven? Do I bear in mind that labor, diligent and faithful labor, in the field of my own heart, and in the field of the world, is the only way to that rest; and that they who labor not now for Christ, shall not rest with him hereafter? Does the prospect of that rest, blessed, satisfying and never-ending, as it will be, cheer and encourage me to be faithful to the end?

Oh! how many precious moments are wasted in softness and self-indulgence, in frivolous pursuits, in idle conversation, and in vague and useless reverie, which, if rightly improved, might tell upon the world's destiny and the Redeemer's glory!—CLARKE.

Be not weary in doing what God bids, or in waiting for what God has promised. Your work may be difficult, but persevere in it. The delay may seem long, but it will come to an end. Look to the Saviour; rest on the promise; keep on with the work, and in due season you will go to your rest, if you faint not. *

The end shall crown the work.

Work on, then, to the end.

Though oft the way is dark,

And clouds portend.

The work is ours to do;

Enough for our faint sight.

The end God knows. Press on!

The crown—is light!—BOWKER.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.—
MATT. vi. 34.

DO I feel that the same kind Providence which clothes the lilies with beauty, and feeds the ravens when they cry, knows and cares for my most trivial wants, and will surely provide for all that I need? Trusting in this Providence, and in the divine promises, do I put away all anxiety for the future, casting all my care on him who careth for me? Is it my chief anxiety that I may do faithfully the duty of to-day, and that trusting in God, I may be ready for whatever to-morrow may bring?

One of the most useless of all things, is to take a deal of trouble in providing against dangers that never come. How many toil to lay up riches which they never enjoy; to provide for exigencies that never happen; to prevent troubles that never come; sacrificing present comfort and enjoyment in guarding against the wants of a period they may never live to see.—W. JAY.

Make a firm-built fence of trust,
All around to-day;
Fill the space with loving work,
And within it stay.
Look not through the sheltering bars,
Anxious for the morrow;
God will help in all that comes,
Be it joy or sorrow.

Whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.—MARK iii. 35.

IS it not a blessed thought that the faith of the believer rests not merely on a truth, but on a person; and that the nearest and dearest of earthly relationships are less near and dear than those that bind the Christian to a personal Saviour, who has borne our nature, and knows our weakness, and can sympathize with, as well as aid us, in all circumstances of life? Am I one with this Saviour by a living faith? For time and eternity do I lean on him as a Friend, as well as trust him as a Redeemer?

The history of all God's dealings with man is the record of an approach nearer and nearer still, until in the incarnate Son he shares our sorrows and carries our sins, and faith puts its finger into the print of the nails, and its hand into the wounded side, and cries out "My Lord, and my God!" We need this. We can believe a truth, but can trust only a person; can admire a truth, but can love only a person; can meditate on a truth, but can commune only with a person; and faith, stretching out a wistful hand to touch his garment, comes at last to embrace himself.—J. KER.

Saviour, Teacher, Guardian, Friend,
Every step I walk with thee;
Through the toils of earthly strife,
To an endless victory!
Unto death and over death,
Not one object of thy care,
But shall prove thy love on earth;
Then, with thee, thy glory share!

The root of the matter is found in me.—JOB xix. 28.

DO I bear in mind that the living principle of grace in the heart is “the root of the matter” in God’s sight, and that it is as necessary to the vitality of our religion as the root of the tree is to its life? Do repentance for sin, faith in Christ, and love to God and to his people, all evidenced in my life, show that I am, indeed, a child of God? Do I feel that it is all-important that I build on the only true foundation, and that real godliness is the one thing needful?

Grace is a spring whose waters fail not, though the streams of gifts may be dried up. He that did create it in us, will conserve it in us. Having begun the good work, he will finish it.—MEAD.

A religion which does not suffice to govern and control a man, will never suffice to save him. That which does not distinguish him from a wicked world, will never distinguish him from a perishing world.

The root of religion is the fear of God; the rule of religion is the law of God; the motive of religion is the love of God; the end of religion is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.

Now, O my Saviour, gracious God,
My comfort, portion, rest,
Thou, none but thou, shall reign within my breast.
Call me to thee! call me thyself—oh speak,
And bid my heart to thee, whom most I seek.
Let this my joy, my life, my life-work be,
To die to self, to live, my Lord, to thee!

—TERSTEEGEN.

Those that seek me early shall find me.—PROV. viii. 17.

DO I feel the importance of early coming to the Saviour, and at once commencing the Christian life? Do I realize the danger of delay; that life is uncertain; that temptations increase, and the power of sinful habit is strengthened by the postponement of God's claims? Have I thought of the many promises and encouragements the Bible holds forth to the young, and of the greater safety, happiness, and usefulness of those who early give themselves to Christ? If I have never come to him, will I come now?

A person converted in youth is like the sun rising on a summer's morning, to shine through the long, bright day. But one converted late in life, is but as the evening star, not appearing till the day is closing, and then but a little while. The most matured, and useful, and happy Christians are, for the most part, those who early come to the Saviour.—J. A. JAMES.

Come, while the blossoms of thy years are brightest,
Thou youthful wanderer in life's flowery maze;
Come while the restless heart is bounding lightest,
And joy's blest sunbeams tremble in thy ways.
Come while sweet thoughts, like summer buds un-
folding,
Waken rich feelings in the hopeful breast;
Come to the cross, where Christ the crown is holding,
Oh come to him, and find eternal rest.

—W. G. CLARKE.

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.—2 PET. i. 10.

DO I feel that conversion is but the first step in the divine life, and that constant earnestness and diligence are needful, if I would press on in the narrow way? Am I diligent in studying the truth, that I may know the will of God; diligent in doing that will so soon as I know it; diligent in prayer for divine light and assistance; diligent in resisting temptation, and overcoming the world, and denying self, that I may live entirely for God?

All the employments and avocations of life are intended to be, and if rightly viewed, will be, to us, means of grace; as truly the gate of heaven to the soul as the sanctuary itself. If in them we endeavor to serve and please God, they will develop our Christian graces, and strengthen our Christian character, and give us the very discipline and training that as good and faithful servants we need, and so prepare us for acceptance at the last great day. *

Firm, faithful, watching unto prayer,

Our Master's voice we will obey;

Toil in the vineyard here, and bear

The heat and burden of the day.

Then, Lord¹ for us a resting-place,

In heaven, at thy right hand, prepare;

And till we see thee, face to face,

Be all our conversation there!

—J. MONTGOMERY.

All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.—HEB. iv. 13.

DO I endeavor to live as becomes one whose secret thoughts and most trivial actions are all open to the eye of God? Do I remember that he looks upon the heart; and is this thought a safeguard and warning to me in temptation, and an incentive to right motives and holy living? Is God's omniscience a comfort to me in the day of trouble? Does it make me careful in self-examination? Is it my encouragement in duty?

It was a saying of Mohammed that "where two are present, God is the third; and where there are three, God is the fourth." And the celebrated Linnæus placed over the door of his lecture-room, the inscription, "Live without sinning: God sees you." *

God is present, and sees, and hears, and takes account of all the thoughts, words and actions of the transgressor. His eye, like a flame of fire, lights up a clear and searching day in his soul, and around his steps, and shows in sunbeams the iniquities which he devises or perpetrates.—T. DWIGHT.

Thine all-surrounding sight surveys
 My rising and my rest;
My public walks, my private ways,
 The secrets of my breast.
So let thy grace surround me still,
 And like a bulwark prove,
To guard my soul from every ill
 Secured by sovereign love.—WATTS.

Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—
MARK xiv. 38.

DO I feel, constantly, the need of seriousness and watchfulness and prayer, as a safeguard against temptation, as a means of growth in grace, and in view of the uncertainty of the hour when the Son of man may come? Do I feel my dependence, my exposure, my need of divine help; and remembering the many promises to prayer, do I come constantly to the throne of grace, and there find all that I need?

It wants nothing but a believing prayer, to turn the promise of God into a performance.—J. MASON.

None are so likely to maintain watchful guard over their hearts and lives, as those who know the comfort of living in near and constant communion with God. They feel their privilege, and fear lest they may lose it. They will dread falling from their high estate, and marring their own comforts, by bringing clouds between themselves and Christ.—J. C. RYLE.

If you can pray aright you have mastered the great secret of a spiritual life.—E. M. GOULBURN.

They pray the best, who pray and watch;
They watch the best, who watch and pray;
They hear Christ's fingers on the latch,
Whether he come by night or day.
Whether they guard the gates and watch,
Or, patient, toil for him and wait,
They hear his fingers on the latch,
Whether he early comes, or late.

The disciples were called Christians, first, in Antioch—ACTS xi. 26.

IF I bear the name of Christian, do I endeavor to walk worthily of the high and holy vocation wherewith I am called? As a disciple, do I learn of Christ? As a follower, do I walk in his steps? As a servant, do I obey his commands, and do his will? As a son and heir, do I cherish his Spirit, and imitate his example, and honor his name, and not only expect, but endeavor to be prepared for the inheritance he has promised? Can I say, “For me to live is Christ”?

See that every hour your thoughts, feelings, and actions be like those of Christ; then will your life be his.

The Scriptures give several names to Christians, expressive of their graces, and character, and expectations: disciples, for their knowledge; believers, for their faith; servants, for their obedience; brethren, for their love; saints, for their holiness; and heirs, because they are soon to receive the inheritance of heaven, which Christ has gone to prepare for them above

*

He walks with God in penitence and faith,
Looking for truth and light to him alone;
The cross his only hope, and strength, and stay:
His thoughts the thoughts of Christ; his highest aim
To be like him, and in his Spirit grow;
God’s word his guide; his path, from day to day,
The path of duty, bright, ascending still,
And soon to end in the full bliss of heaven!

An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.—1 PET. i. 4.

DO I feel that though I am nothing, and have nothing of myself, yet in Christ I possess all things; that in him I have everlasting riches, and an inheritance that will endure when time shall have passed away? Is it not a blessed source of comfort to know, that though on earth we may not have great possessions, or may even be in poverty or suffering, we may look forward to riches, and crowns, and kingdoms that shall endure for ever?

How blessed are God's people who leave all for him who is worth to them, more than all. If poor for this world, they are rich in him. If earthly riches are theirs, their highest riches are still in God. Their bodies are below, but their hearts are above; their lives here, but their conversation, their hopes, their treasure in heaven.—J. MASON.

If the way to heaven be narrow, it is not long; and if the gate be strait, it opens into endless life.—BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

The kingdom that I seek,
Is thine; so let the way
That leads to it be also thine,
Else I shall surely stray.
Smooth let it be, or rough,
It still w'll be the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not;
It leads me to thy rest!

There is none good but one.—MARK x. 18.

DO I acknowledge, with becoming humility, the sad truth, that no one of our race is by nature good and holy, and that the blessed Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, is the only example of perfect goodness the world has ever seen? Do I look to him alone for my righteousness, feeling that I have none of my own, asking to be clothed with the ample covering of his merit, that I may stand accepted in him?

Christ is full and sufficient for all his people. He has righteousness enough to cover all their sins; wealth enough to supply all their wants; grace enough to subdue all their lusts; wisdom and power enough to vanquish all their enemies; virtue enough to cure all their diseases; and fullness enough to save them to the uttermost.—SPENCER.

He who boasts of being perfect, is perfect in folly. I have been a good deal up and down the world, and I never did see either a perfect horse or a perfect man, and I never shall until two Sundays come together.—SPURGEON.

O Jesus, full of pardoning grace,
More full of grace than I of sin;
With humble faith I seek thy face,
Open thine arms, and take me in.
Robed in thy perfect righteousness,
Thy love for ever will I bless.
Angels shall hear the songs I raise,
Prolonged through heaven's eternal days!

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.—ISA. liii. 7.

AM I patient under suffering, provocation, or injury? Is it not a relief to remember that my heavenly Father feels for me, and that my gracious Redeemer, under far greater sufferings, opened not his mouth? And under any suffering, no matter what its cause or source, do I endeavor to cherish a Christian spirit, and to be profited by it? Am I submissive and humble under divine chastening, knowing it is sent in wisdom and goodness?

Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride. She teaches humility; bridles the tongue; restrains the hand; tramples on temptations; endures persecutions; consummates martyrdom. She comforts the poor; moderates the rich; makes us humble in prosperity; cheerful in adversity; unmoved by calumny and reproach. She teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured. She delights the faithful; invites the unbelieving; and is beautiful in every sex and age.—BISHOP HORNE.

Think of the gain only; count not the losses;
Think of the crown only; count not the crosses;
Think of the angels surrounding the throne;
Think of the victory, the song, and the crown;
Faint not, and murmur not; weary not ever;
Soon thou with Christ shall be, reigning for ever!

But let a man examine himself.—1 COR. xi. 28.

DO I always keep before me the divine standard of character and duty, and often compare myself as I am, with what they teach me I ought to be, that I may know where I stand in God's sight, and what progress I am making in divine things? Do I ask for divine light and assistance in seeking to know myself? Am I willing to know the worst, as well as the best, concerning myself? Is the great end of all my self-searching that I may become wiser and better every day?

The first step in moral, as well as in mental improvement, is, to know our deficiencies and errors. He that is satisfied with his attainments, will never make progress, either in knowledge or grace. We must know ourselves, if we would improve ourselves. *

Turn thine eyes unto thyself, and judge not the deeds of other men. In judging others, one labors in vain, often errs, and easily sins; but in judging himself, he always labors fruitfully.—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

Thrice ask, as fades each sun's last ray,
What's been my life throughout this day?
What have I learned, that's worth the knowing?
What have I done, that's worth the doing?
What have I sought, that I should shun?
What duties have I left undone?
Such self-inquiries are the road,
That leads to virtue and to God.—PYTHAGORAS.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.—NUM. xxiii. 10.

DO I realize that if I would make sure of dying the death of the righteous, I must live his life? And is it my great concern, from day to day, to live by faith on the Son of God? Do I feel that every day is forming and fixing the character that I must wear for ever; and that as I sow here, so I must reap hereafter? Am I diligent to make my calling and election sure; sure to myself, that I may have the comfort of assurance; sure to others, that I may influence them for good?

I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home. I have sent all before. God’s finger is on the latch, and I am ready for him to enter.” And when asked if he had no fear of missing the heavenly inheritance, “Nay,” said he, “there is one crown in heaven which even Gabriel could not wear; one throne, that even Paul could not fill. It was made for me, and I shall have it!” Oh, what a joyous thought! “There remaineth a rest!” And if I am a child of God, it is as surely mine as if I was there!—SPURGEON.

Rest remaineth; rest from sin,
Where no guilt can enter in;
Where all warring thought shall cease;
Where are purity and peace;
Rest from sorrow; rest from tears;
Rest from parting; rest from fears;
Where each trembling thought shall be,
Lost, my Saviour, lost in thee!

If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.
—JAMES iv. 15.

DO I bear in mind that as to all my plans and arrangements for the future, God is the supreme and only arbiter; and that results rest only with him? Do I ask his guidance in everything, and watch for the indications of his providence, and am I sincerely willing to be led by him? While doing all that I can to secure what seem desirable ends, is it still in humble submission to the divine will, and with the heartfelt conviction and feeling that God knows what is right and wise and best?

Unto them that love and trust God, he causeth all things to work for the best.—COVERDALE.

All our plans should be formed in dependence on God. In all of them we should remember the uncertainty of life, the short-sightedness of our own wisdom, and that God, as a sovereign, presides over all the affairs of men. We should ask for his guidance, look to his word and providence for direction, and be satisfied with the results which he orders or permits. If thus we acknowledge him, he will direct our paths.

*

He leadeth me, oh blessed thought;
Sweet words, with heavenly comfort fraught;
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.
Lord, I would clasp thine hand in mine,
Nor ever murmur or repine,
Content, whate'er my lot may be,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.—GILMORE

Boast not thyself of to-morrow.—PROV. xxvii. 1.

REALIZING the uncertainty of the future, am I earnest and diligent in improving the present? Is it my great aim now to be growing in knowledge and grace and usefulness, so that every day shall show some advance in the divine life? Do I realize the value of time? Do I watch for opportunities for doing and getting good? Do I live, habitually, with eternity in view, and so as every day to honor God, and be preparing for the life beyond the grave?

Oh! how many deeds of deathless virtue, and immortal crime, the world had wanted, had the actor said, I will do this to-morrow.—LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

Blessed is the man who at the close of to-day, can look upon all his work as done, and anticipate to-morrow as bringing only what properly belongs to it. All duties, privileges, trials, joys, sorrows, everything we have, we have to-day. Yesterday is gone. To-morrow, is not. Only to-day is ours; and only in to-day do we hold all our possessions.—BATE.

In human hearts what bolder thoughts can rise,
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain. The reverse
Is sure to none. And yet on this "perhaps,"
This "peradventure," infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant, we build
Our mountain hopes; spin out eternal schemes,
And big with life's futurities, expire!—YOUNG.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you reason of the hope that is in you.—1 PET. iii. 15.

AM I intelligently able, and at all suitable times willing, to give a reason for my faith as a Christian? Do I watch against that fear of man which bringeth a snare; and feel that if I loved and feared God more, I should fear the world less? Knowing that my faith and hope as a Christian rest on the surest foundation, am I ever ready to defend them against either argument, or cavils, or sneers? Do I glory in the cross of Christ? —

I know men, and I tell you Jesus Christ is not a man: he is God. And his divinity once admitted, Christianity appears with the precision and clearness of algebra: it has the connectedness and unity of a science. The gospel is more than a book. It is a living thing, active, powerful, overcoming every obstacle in its way. It possesses a secret virtue of indescribable efficacy; a warmth that impresses the understanding, and softens the heart. The soul can never go astray with this book for its guide.—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. —

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend his cause;
Maintain the honor of his name,
The glory of his cross.
Jesus, my God! I know his name;
His name is all my trust;
Nor will he put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.—WATTS.

He hath done all things well.—MARK vii. 37.

HAVE I such unfailing trust and confidence in the wisdom and goodness of my heavenly Father, that in all circumstances I can and do feel that he doeth all things well? In joy or sorrow, in comfort or suffering, in health or sickness, in life or death, can I trust him still? And so trusting, can I feel that all things are working together for my highest good? Do I look habitually to him, and live not merely for this, but for the unseen world?

Thankfulness in joy, is putting God into our comforts; and resignation in sorrow, is putting God between us and our grief.

How satisfied do we feel when we have learned to see the hand of God in every event of life, and to feel that in all he is guided by wisdom and goodness! He who has learned to seek nothing but the will of God, shall always find what he seeks. If we stand right with heaven, every cross, even, is a blessing, and every blessing a pledge and foretaste of future happiness.—HALL.

There are no lives so full of light,
That every day and hour is bright.
There are no lives so full of gloom,
That happiness has there no room.
The prospered have their hours of care;
The sad and sorrowing everywhere,
At times must feel—their only rest—
“God knoweth best—he knoweth best!”

Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby, is not wise.—PROV. xx. 1.

DO I seriously endeavor in all things to aim at self-control; and if need be, self-denial, according to the will of God? Do I diligently and prayerfully strive to keep in subjection all the bodily appetites and propensities and passions, that they may not have dominion over me? In eating do I avoid excess? And especially as to drinking, do I "touch not, taste not, handle not," not only that I may not be injured, but that I may set a good example to others?

Strong drink is not only the devil's way into a man, but it is man's way to the devil.—ADAM CLARKE.

O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee "Devil!" Oh! that men should put an enemy to their mouths to steal away their brains, and that we should with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves to beasts!—SHAKESPEARE.

The death of modesty; the grave of wealth;
Reason's destroyer; murderer of health;
The bane of character; the beggar's friend;
Of crime, the source; of self-respect, the end;
The wife's deep anguish; children's woe and shame;
Degrading men to brutes, in all but name;
Spreading on earth such woes as none can tell;
The curse of all for life; and then the gate of hell!

In lowness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves.—PHIL. ii. 3.

DO I look constantly to the perfect standard of character and duty set forth in God's law, and so keep low estimates and humble thoughts of self? Whatever my attainments in knowledge or grace or usefulness, do I still remember my ignorance, and sinfulness, and shortcomings in both aim and duty? Do I look more to my own defects than my excellences; more to the excellences of others than to their defects? Do I pray for a truly humble spirit?

When we think most for others, God thinks most of us.—M. HENRY.

Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.—GURNALL.

If men did but know themselves more, they would be more humble, more content, more thankful, more charitable. As the first step heavenward is humility, so the first step hellward, is pride, the beginning of which is folly, and the end shame; either penitent shame, ending in repentance, or penal shame, ending in everlasting punishment.—J. MASON.

Life is a path where we should humbly walk,
Of self forgetful, seeking others' weal;
The hallowed sphere of love to brother man.
Esteem of others, deeds of kindness shown
To all about us, these may bless and cheer
Hearts that are weary, souls that are depressed,
And gild earth's pathway with the beams of heaven!

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.—Ps. lxi. 2.

IN all circumstances do I feel my weakness and dependence, and seek for strength and support from on high? By faith do I rest all my hopes of salvation on the rock Christ Jesus? In darkness, or doubt, or conflict, or sorrow, do I look to him for light, and guidance, and strength and comfort? In duty, under trial, in life or in death, do I look away from self and self-dependence, to the sympathy, and power, and promise of God, and so find rest and help and peace?

The love, the promise, the grace, the power, the intercession of Christ are for ever the same; and to them, as to a strong tower, we may ever run and be safe. As the rock does not shake or change though the storms may beat and the waves dash against it, so he is for ever the sure trust of all that come to him, *

If ever thou look for comfort on earth and salvation in heaven, put thyself fully and always on Christ. Look not for any blessing out of him; and in and by and from him, look for all blessing. Find in him thy wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption; thy riches, strength, and glory.—RUTHERFORD.

The road that leads from earth to heaven,

Fast by the cross doth lie;

And all our strength its path to tread,

Is drawn from strength on high.

How little of that road, my soul,

How little hast thou gone!

Take heart, and let the thought of God

Allure thee further on!

Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.—LUKE xii. 40.

DO I realize how near, at farthest, death must be; how very near it possibly may be; how suddenly, at any moment, it may come? Do I endeavor to live in constant readiness for its coming? If I would die the death of the righteous, am I daily living his life? By sincere repentance for sin, by faith in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, by a life conformed to his will and filled with his Spirit, have I the evidence that for me to die shall be gain?

An eccentric minister, stepping one day into the shop of one of his parishioners, asked abruptly, without even waiting for a salutation, "Did you expect me?" "No!" was the reply. "What if I had been death?" he asked; and stepping out, was gone as suddenly as he came in. What a thought for us! Does it not impress the lesson, "Be ye also ready!" *

Death to the Christian, is the funeral of all his sorrows and evils, and the resurrection of all his joys.—
J. MASON.

Oh what is death to him who dies,
With God's own blessings on his head?
A charter, not a sacrifice;
A life immortal to the dead.
And life is only good and great,
When man devotes himself to be,
In thought, and aim, and word, and deed,
A living sacrifice to thee!

When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.—MATT. vi. 3.

DO I always bear in mind that the property I hold, is not mine, but God's; and that I am but his steward, and soon to give up my account to him? And when I give is it to please him, as well as from a feeling of sympathy for others who may be in need? Do I watch against selfishness and self-conceit; against ostentation in giving, which is but another form of pride; and against covetousness, which is idolatry? Do I remember that for all I have and do I must answer at the judgment?

God grant that my bounty may be a clear and transparent river, flowing from pure charity, and uncontaminated by self-love, ambition, or interest. What are the paltry gifts for which others forget to thank me, compared with the blessings for which I have so often forgotten to thank God!—GOTTHOLD.

We might somewhat marvel what the apostle Paul should mean, to say that “covetousness is idolatry,” if the daily practice of men did not show that, whereas nature requireth God to be honored with wealth, we honor, for the most part, wealth as God.—HOOKER.

In all thy thriving still misdoubt some evil,
Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dim
To all things else. Wealth is the conjurer's devil,
Whom when he thinks he has, the devil hath him.
Gold thou mayest safely touch; but if it stick
Unto thine hands, it woundeth to the quick.

—HERBERT.

Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.—ISA. xxvi. 4.

TS all my trust for time and eternity quietly reposed on God? Do I trust his word to instruct, his providence to guide, his Son to redeem, his Spirit to sanctify, his grace to save me? Do I cast my cares on him, and rest my hopes on his promises, and leave all my earthly interests in his hands, and commit my soul to him, in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator and Redeemer? Do I feel that I am for ever safe, trusting my all to him?

I was thinking this morning of an expression of Rutherford's which I feel is the burden of my song:—"I lay my head on the bosom of Omnipotence." While I can keep hold of this, it will be for me a fine day, whether it rains, or hails, or shines.—R. CECIL.

To make our reliance on Providence both pious and rational, we should prepare all things with the same care and diligence as if there were no such thing as Providence to depend upon; and then we should as wholly and humbly rely upon it, as if we had made no preparation at all, for if we trust God we may be sure of all that Omnipotence can do for us.—SOUTH.

Trust in a prince, his word may fail;
In friends, they soon shall die;
In health and wealth, the world's regard,
Alas! how soon they fly!
Trust thine own heart, 'tis faithless all;
Thy life, 'tis insecure;
But he that trusteth in the Lord,
For ever shall endure!

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.—JOB vii. 6.

DOES this last day of the year impress me with the solemn truth that life is fast passing away, and that soon I must go to give up my account to God? Realizing the brevity of life, and how fast it is flying, and how soon its end will come, am I diligent to improve it to the utmost? Do I feel that the end of all things is at hand? Am I sober, and do I watch unto prayer? When the Master calls will he find me ready?

There are two words that should take up most of our thoughts and cares, viz.: time and eternity: time, because it is so fast passing away; eternity, because it will so soon begin; time, because it will so soon be ended; eternity, because it never will end. *

Our life hangs, at every moment, by a thread; but that thread is in a Father's hand.—EVANS.

We are kept at uncertainty as to the precise time of Christ's coming, that we may be always ready. For it is no thanks to a man to be ready for an attack, if he knows, beforehand, just the time when it will be made.—MATTHEW HENRY.

Well, if our days must fly,
We'll keep their end in sight;
We'll spend them all in wisdom's way,
And let them speed their flight.
They'll waft us sooner o'er
This life's tempestuous sea;
Soon we shall reach the peaceful shore
Of blest eternity!—WATTS.

INDEX OF TEXTS.

GENESIS.	PAGE	PSALMS.	PAGE
32 : 26.....	289	1 : 3.....	306
EXODUS.		4 : 4.....	72
14 : 15.....	151	4 : 6.....	144
25 : 22.....	237	5 : 3.....	135
NUMBERS.		5 : 8.....	91
23 : 10.....	362	16 : 3.....	127
DEUTERONOMY.		16 : 11.....	140
4 : 9.....	90	17 : 5.....	108
8 : 2.....	67	17 : 15.....	52
10 : 12.....	64	18 : 28.....	42
33 : 25.....	130	19 : 7.....	233
JOSHUA.		19 : 14.....	88
3 : 4.....	70	23 : 1.....	150
24 : 15.....	146	23 : 4.....	134
1 SAMUEL.		23 : 6.....	65
3 : 9.....	235	26 : 8.....	28
7 : 12.....	221	27 : 7.....	302
20 : 3.....	251	30 : 5.....	315
2 KINGS.		31 : 15.....	171
5 : 13.....	71	32 : 1.....	329
JOB.		32 : 5.....	256
7 : 29.....	373	36 : 9.....	254
11 : 7.....	187	37 : 3.....	228
11 : 12.....	214	37 : 5.....	335
19 : 26.....	283	39 : 1.....	263
19 : 28.....	352	40 : 4.....	53
22 : 21.....	148	40 : 8.....	106
23 : 16.....	66	41 : 1.....	132
37 : 21.....	272	42 : 5.....	200
		48 : 14.....	57
		50 : 23.....	92
		51 : 9.....	139
		51 : 10.....	19
		51 : 12.....	61
		51 : 15.....	63
		51 : 17.....	219
		55 : 6.....	26
		55 : 22.....	25

PAGE	PAGE
56 : 4.....	120
61 : 2.....	369
62 : 8.....	138
62 : 11.....	160
66 : 18.....	194
68 : 19.....	180
84 : 11.....	273
86 : 11.....	96
86 : 11.....	137
90 : 12.....	153
94 : 14.....	89
97 : 11.....	218
103 : 2.....	268
103 : 3.....	269
107 : 15.....	111
109 : 4.....	163
119 : 15.....	343
119 : 18.....	321
119 : 32.....	195
119 : 67.....	82
119 : 130.....	45
126 : 3.....	77
126 : 16.....	174
129 : 23.....	231
139 : 23, 24.....	38
141 : 3.....	169
143 : 10.....	39
145 : 2.....	199
145 : 18.....	183
150 : 2.....	331
PROVERBS.	
4 : 23.....	287
8 : 17.....	353
8 : 25.....	54
10 : 22.....	295
11 : 25.....	191
15 : 23.....	73
15 : 29.....	117
16 : 3.....	10
16 : 32.....	286
17 : 3.....	300
18 : 24.....	30
20 : 1.....	367
21 : 23.....	223
23 : 26.....	178
24 : 9.....	274
27 : 1.....	364
28 : 13.....	87
ECCLESIASTES.	
7 : 9.....	162
7 : 14.....	303
9 : 8.....	116
SONG OF SOLOMON.	
5 : 2.....	192
8 : 5.....	328
ISAIAH.	
2 : 5.....	36
14 : 31.....	35
24 : 15.....	107
26 : 3.....	158
26 : 4.....	372
27 : 5.....	55
32 : 20.....	211
40 : 28.....	80
40 : 29.....	243
43 : 19.....	346
44 : 22.....	246
45 : 22.....	175
53 : 7.....	360
55 : 11.....	239
57 : 15.....	329
64 : 6.....	110
64 : 6.....	282
JEREMIAH.	
17 : 9.....	29
29 : 13.....	93
LAMENTATIONS.	
3 : 24.....	141
HOSEA.	
2 : 14.....	131
JOEL.	
2 : 13.....	323
3 : 16.....	37
AMOS.	
6 : 1.....	275
4 : 12.....	103
MICAH.	
2 : 10.....	205
HABAKKUK.	
2 : 3.....	224
HAGGAI.	
1 : 5.....	177

ZECHARIAH.		PAGE	PAGE	
4 : 10.....		165	11 : 3.....	338
8 : 13.....		276	11 : 9.....	44
9 : 12.....		104	11 : 13.....	186
14 : 7.....		136	12 : 32.....	193
MALACHI.			12 : 40.....	370
3 : 6.....		12	12 : 48.....	265
4 : 2.....		325	14 : 17.....	319
MATTHEW.			16 : 10.....	326
5 : 9.....		278	19 : 10.....	222
5 : 13.....		270	21 : 19.....	46
5 : 16.....		220	22 : 19.....	216
6 : 3.....		371	23 : 42.....	294
6 : 6.....		155	24 : 29.....	142
6 : 32.....		49	24 : 32.....	296
6 : 33.....		197	JOHN.	
6 : 34.....		350	5 : 39.....	9
7 : 1.....		102	6 : 37.....	260
7 : 12.....		59	7 : 37.....	342
7 : 14.....		188	8 : 50.....	293
8 : 17.....		226	12 : 21.....	252
8 : 25.....		78	12 : 26.....	179
9 : 12.....		253	13 : 7.....	290
9 : 13.....		318	13 : 17.....	305
9 : 29.....		255	14 : 6.....	204
10 : 32.....		322	14 : 15.....	161
11 : 28.....		101	14 : 19.....	213
12 : 33.....		241	14 : 27.....	277
14 : 27.....		31	16 : 20.....	345
16 : 24.....		229	17 : 17.....	312
19 : 20.....		232	17 : 21.....	190
20 : 22.....		85	20 : 28.....	32
21 : 28.....		105	21 : 16.....	18
24 : 42.....		58	21 : 17.....	125
24 : 44.....		123	21 : 17.....	34
26 : 41.....		41	ACTS.	
28 : 20.....		209	3 : 19.....	84
MARK.			9 : 6.....	118
3 : 35.....		351	9 : 11.....	182
7 : 37.....		366	11 : 23.....	69
8 : 36.....		152	11 : 26.....	357
9 : 24.....		324	14 : 22.....	112
10 : 18.....		359	16 : 31.....	95
13 : 34.....		114	26 : 20.....	154
14 : 8.....		113	ROMANS.	
14 : 38.....		356	5 : 5.....	164
LUKE.			5 : 8.....	172
8 : 50.....		149	5 : 20.....	259
10 : 39.....		207	8 : 1.....	79
10 : 42.....		181	8 : 9.....	250
11 : 2.....		173	8 : 18.....	94
			8 : 26.....	249
			8 : 28.....	217

PAGE	EPHESIANS.	PAGE	
8 : 31.....	284	2 : 14.....	317
8 : 37.....	327	2 : 16.....	297
10 : 10.....	122	4 : 1.....	100
11 : 20.....	347	4 : 23.....	129
11 : 33.....	266	4 : 30.....	311
12 : 2.....	208	4 : 31.....	230
12 : 3.....	267	5 : 1.....	98
12 : 9.....	245	5 : 16.....	247
12 : 10.....	17	6 : 6.....	56
12 : 11.....	159	6 : 11.....	15
12 : 12.....	14		
12 : 15.....	291		
13 : 11.....	86		
14 : 7.....	332		
15 : 3.....	22		
16 : 20.....	81		
PHILIPPIANS.			
1 : 6.....	248		
2 : 3.....	368		
2 : 4.....	271		
2 : 5.....	121		
3 : 10.....	20		
4 : 4.....	313		
4 : 5.....	76		
4 : 6.....	62		
4 : 13.....	124		
4 : 19.....	115		
COLOSSIANS.			
2 : 7.....	262		
2 : 10.....	203		
3 : 2.....	11		
3 : 15.....	60		
3 : 23.....	167		
1 THESSALONIANS.			
5 : 17.....	189		
5 : 22.....	242		
2 THESSALONIANS.			
3 : 13.....	233		
1 TIMOTHY.			
1 : 19.....	336		
2 : 5.....	47		
4 : 7.....	304		
4 : 15.....	23		
4 : 16.....	185		
6 : 12.....	334		
2 TIMOTHY.			
1 : 12.....	285		
2 : 13.....	279		
4 : 5.....	196		
GALATIANS.			
2 : 20.....	215		
4 : 18.....	264		
6 : 2.....	280		
TITUS.			
2 : 10.....	170		

HEBREWS.	PAGE		PAGE
2 : 1.....	340	3 : 15.....	365
3 : 6.....	83	3 : 16.....	16
4 : 11.....	349	4 : 7.....	176
4 : 13.....	355	4 : 16.....	126
6 : 10.....	292	5 : 5.....	40
10 : 22.....	157	5 : 5.....	128
10 : 37.....	68	5 : 7.....	147
10 : 38.....	309		
11 : 16.....	184		
12 : 1.....	75		
12 : 2.....	198	2 PETER.	
12 : 11.....	348	1 : 10.....	354
12 : 14.....	310	2 : 6.....	225
13 : 5.....	143	3 : 18.....	236
13 : 5.....	337		
13 : 8.....	50		
JAMES.			
1 : 12.....	145	1 JOHN.	
1 : 21.....	234	1 : 7.....	156
2 : 26.....	288	2 : 6.....	298
4 : 15.....	363	2 : 15.....	344
4 : 17.....	341	2 : 28.....	227
		3 : 2.....	261
		3 : 3.....	240
		4 : 18.....	314
		5 : 14.....	210
1 PETER.			
1 : 4.....	358	REVELATION.	
2 : 7.....	202	3 : 8.....	166
		14 : 5.....	206

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01005 3082